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Love Beyond Time - Volume 2

The Story So Far 001

Chapter 1: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 007

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Love Beyond Time

Volume 2

This is a story that occurred long, long ago.

On the night of the annual festival in a northern village, the lover, Manibe, of a girl born from a family of warriors, Setona, disappeared.

Little did Setona know that her village practiced an ancient ritual ceremony every fifty years - the offering of a "human sacrifice" to protect their village from the destructive wrath of the mountain gods. That night marked the fiftieth year and Setona's lover, who was originally a village outsider, had been chosen to become the sacrifice.

Once she discovered the village's horrible secret, Setona rushed to the shrine to find only a large pool of blood where her lover had been brutally murdered.

Filled with violent rage, she destroyed the shrine's seal and released... the evil beings called the Magatsu-Kami and the lone man who serves as their eternal watchman.

The Story So Far

あらすじ

Choosing to accept the offer of immortality from the watchman, Rai, Setona becomes an "undead" and together, they start on a timeless journey.

The Heian era during a civil war—

No matter which era they journeyed in, men and women lived and died while becoming possessed and being manipulated by the Magatsu-Kami. Amidst their countless encounters with such people, the two Timeless travelers came to discover varying forms of love and emotion.

But can Setona accomplish her goal of finding her lover's reincarnation in order to be with him once more?

Hissei Takehime's long running historical romantic drama series finally comes to it's exciting climax!

Love Beyond Time

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Love Beyond Time

CHAPTER 3
All right, then.
Let's hurry, shall we?
We don't want to miss the ferry.
No sun in four days!
What, spring? It's been nothing but rain!
Can you believe it?
We'll be reaching Edo shortly.
ALTHOUGH I CAN SOMEWHAT TELL WHAT HE'S THINKING.
...
RAI AND I HAVE TRAVELED TOGETHER FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, BUT HE STILL REMAINS A MYSTERY.
THE ONE TRAVELING THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF HER LOVER'S REINCARNATION AND THE ONE TRAVELING THE WORLD HUNTING DOWN THE MAGATSU-KAMI.
Could you please be quiet?
CHUCKLE
Bingo!
He's probably thinking, "How noisy" right about now.
I'll be more than happy to continue as your guide
I am an expert when it comes to Edo!

That'd be me!
What little brother?
Geez-
Don't be so cold, Sir.
Especially since your little brother here's playing tour guide.
I'm serious.
I was really surprised when I saw you back at the inn.
You two look exactly like my deceased brother and sister!
"SINCE I FEEL A CLOSE AFFINITY TO YOU TWO, I'LL GLADLY TAKE YOU TO EDO," HE SAYS.
STARE...
Hey! What's with the look?
BUT HONESTLY, HE'S REALLY ANNOYING.

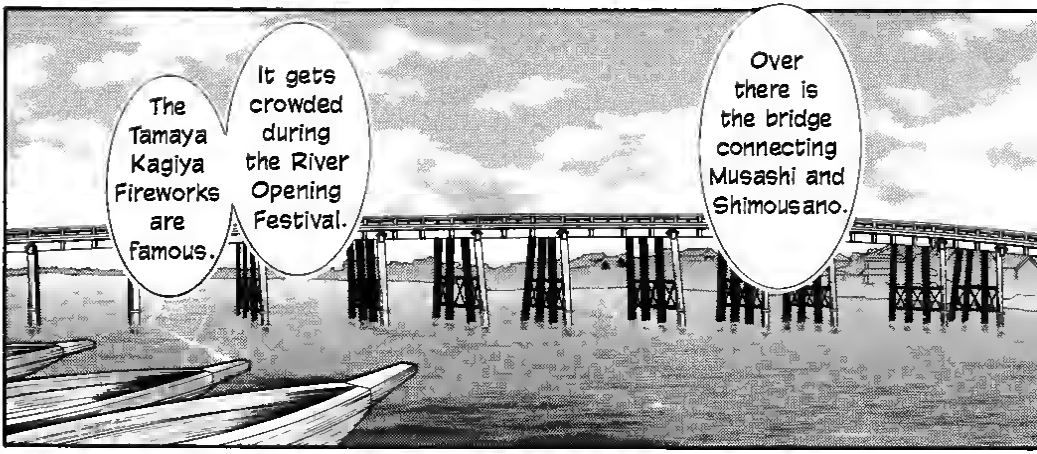
時遍路

LOVE BEYOND TIME

CHAPTER 3: JIGOKU DAYU - HELL'S COURTESAN 1

You sure had me fooled.
Getting the popular Joukichi here to cater to your every whim.
SMIRK
Oh, well.
It's not like we had any plans.
Still, I gotta wonder.
After all your travels, why visit now?
You're traveling too, right? Where to?
Where I'm going is not worth mention-ing.
It is not our first time in Edo.
Back then, this area was covered in water.
Ha ha! Good one. That was hundreds of years ago.
Hey, Rai!
What's important is you two!
Get yourselves dressed and let's go sight-seeing!
CLACK

First up, is the main shopping district, Nihonbashi.
With a splendid array of domestic and foreign retail stores, there's nothing you won't find!
After that are the famous Edo theatres!
Whereas Kansai's Kabuki style is soft, Edo's is full of action.
The excitement will leave you wanting more!


Over there is the bridge connecting Musashi and Shimousano.
It gets crowded during the River Opening Festival.
The Tamaya Kagiya Fireworks are famous.

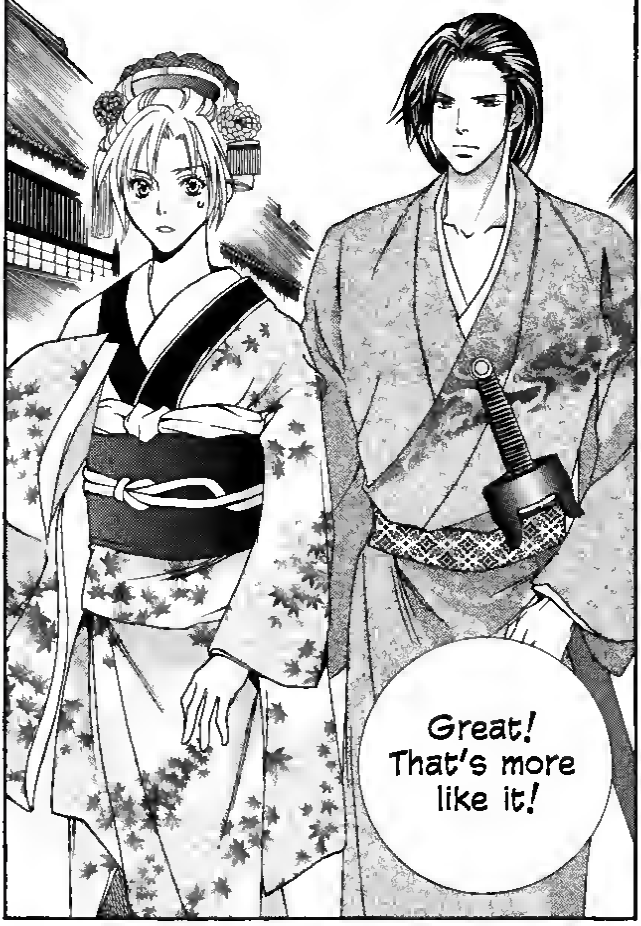
❑ Love Beyond Time - Vol.2 ❑
Free Talk

HI everyone! Chikuhime here. Thank you for picking up *Love Beyond Time* Volume 2! This is the second volume of the series *Love Beyond Time* that was serialized in the magazine, *Josei Jimi*, and then picked up by publishing company Shobunkan to be compiled into comic books! To those who have read the first volume, thank you x2!

The second volume begins in the Edo period. The story of *Jigoku Dayu: Hell's Courtesan* runs from the start of this volume all the way to the epilogue. In this volume, I wanted to focus on the two main protagonists, especially Rai (laughs). You'll see him going on a rampage from the latter half of this volume. Though he's lived for centuries, he isn't aware of his own feelings...

The relationship between Rai and Setona is that of "family." Though it is certain they share a strong bond with one another, I didn't want to turn it into what you would call "a cliched romance story." The story quickly develops as they both deal with their own feelings as well as those of the side characters. (laughs)

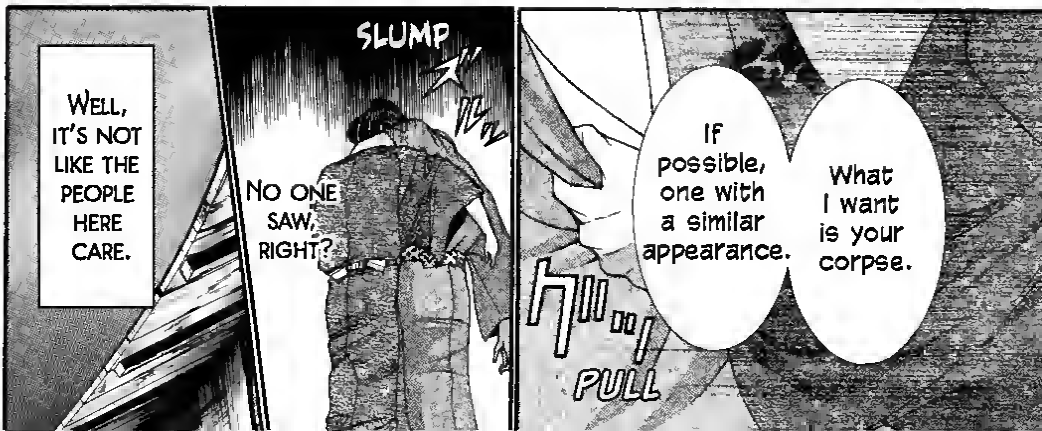
This all actually happens within a few days on the Edo Bridge. Due to certain mature circumstances, Rai decides to leave Setona behind and takes off... Well, I hope you enjoy it!



Hey, Akane!
You're here just in time!
You look busy.
Are you going somewhere?
I'm showing these two around Edo.
Great! Then, I can show *her* around! Do you mind?
No. Go ahead.
What?
Don't worry. I don't mind at all!
PULL
ドッ
It'll be fine!
I'll show you around the shops!
What? But...
OK!
Let's go!

We should get going, too!
I'll take you somewhere fun.
...
What's going on?
Are you a slave dealer?
Perhaps a swindler
For what purpose have you been following us?
Guess the jig is up.
Too bad. I planned on letting you leave with good memories.
What do you mean?
Drop the act. I am not as easy to fool as Setona.

STAB
You're wrong on both counts, Sir.
?!
Sorry.


What I want is your corpse.
If possible, one with a similar appearance.
PULL
SLUMP
NO ONE SAW, RIGHT?
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE THE PEOPLE HERE CARE.

Uh... Yes.
Sweets?!
Hey, Akane. Shouldn't we head back? It's getting dark.
No way! There's a really good sweets store up ahead!
WHATEVER.
SLIDE
SHOULD I BE HAPPY THAT THIS GIRL'S SO DITZY?
It's over there beyond the temple.
LOOK
Where?!
LOOK
Where is it?!
IT'LL MAKE IT EASIER TO KILL HER!
SLAP
Ah!!

...
What are you doing?!
Maybe you can...
...find peace here.
Please rest in peace, Sir.
RUSTLE
Good thing we agreed to meet at a temple.

BAM
Joukichi!
I'm sorry! I messed up!
RUSTLE
?!
I see.
We have been negligent.
ひた…
LIFT
Akane, you-!
She was too strong!
I couldn't do it!

PULL
I cannot die.
However, it is not my hobby to get killed either.
What is all this? Explain yourself.
Little brother.

Now, then.
Tell me.
Why did you try to kill me?
CRACK
Whoa!
I am the one asking the questions.
CLOSING IN
Wha-?
You...
I killed you!
Wait. Why did you kill me?
RAI, HE...

...LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING FUN.
H-Hey! Get away from me!
Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!
Why did you kill me?
Answer me.
Well, he's a natural sadist after all.
Stop it! I'll tell you!
It's because we wanted to escape!
We...
...were sick of this kind of life!

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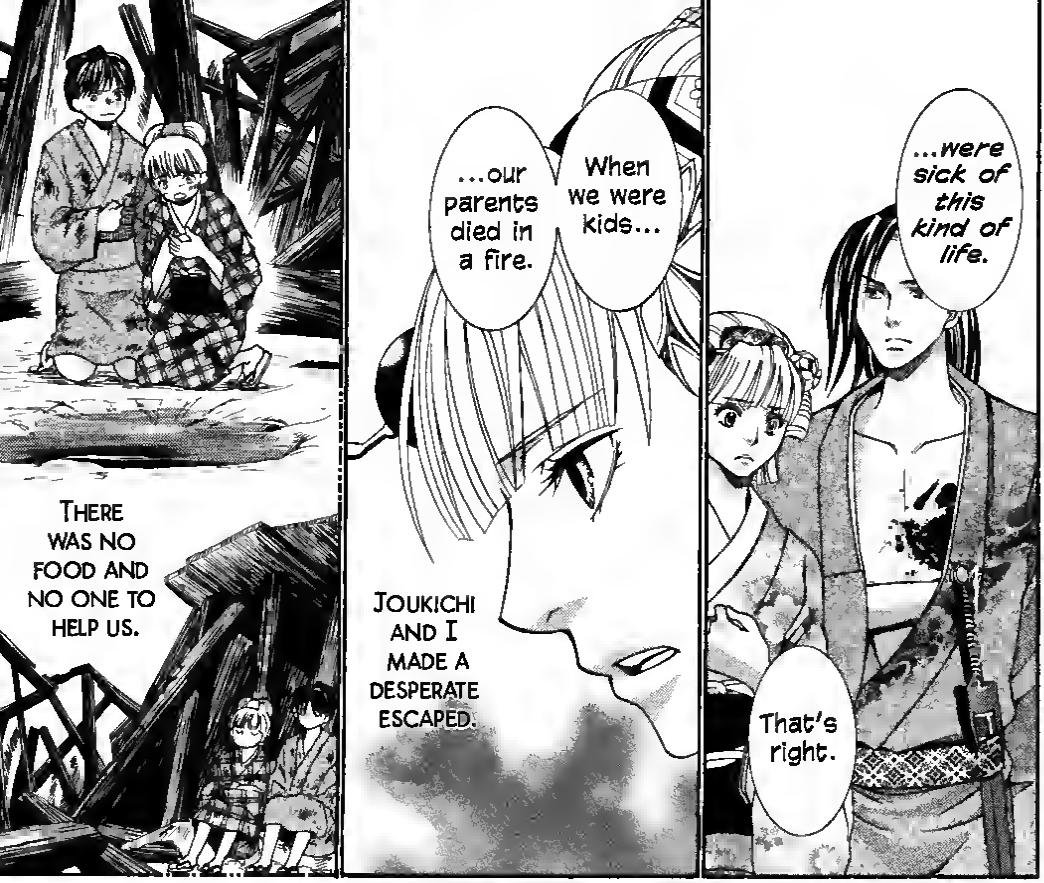
Love Beyond Time

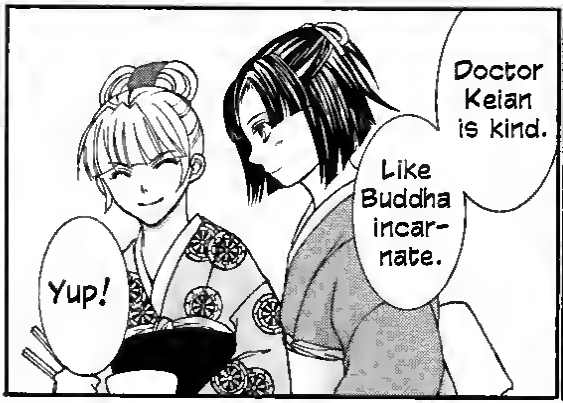
Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 2


...were sick of this kind of life.
That's right.
When we were kids...
...our parents died in a fire.
JOUKICHI AND I MADE A DESPERATE ESCAPED.
THERE WAS NO FOOD AND NO ONE TO HELP US.

WE TOOK SHELTER FROM THE RAIN OF ASHES AND SLEPT UNDER THE BURNT REMAINS.
Hey, Joukichi. Are we going to die?

THAT MAN WAS CALLED KEIAN.
HE WAS A KIND-LOOKING DOCTOR.
Would you like to come with me?

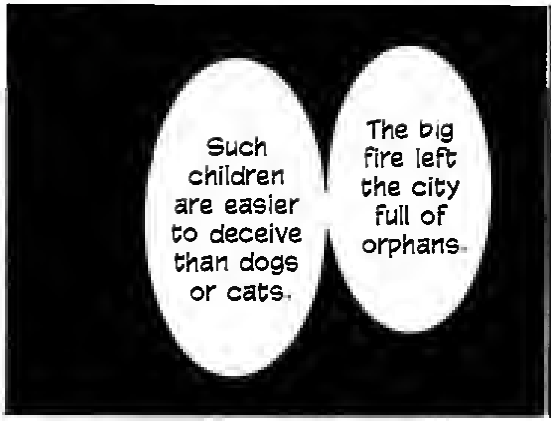
How pitiful.
Such young children suffering so.
CRUNCH



SUCH DAYS CONTINUED FOR A WHILE, UNTIL...

I dislike children. They are too noisy.
THE MEDICINE WE RECEIVED DID NOT HELP.
Good boy. Now drink this medicine.
Though at night...
...it is somewhat bearable.
Everyone ...
...thought it was a disease, since many children were still healthy.
HUH? DOCTOR KEIAN...
...AND A GUEST?
BUT IN ACTUALITY...
Toilet...
TAP
TAP

WHAT?
Testing poison on children.
You really are a bad man, Keian.


Such children are easier to deceive than dogs or cats.
The big fire left the city full of orphans.

In order to measure the effectiveness accurately, sacrifices are necessary.
What are you saying, Lord Tanaka?

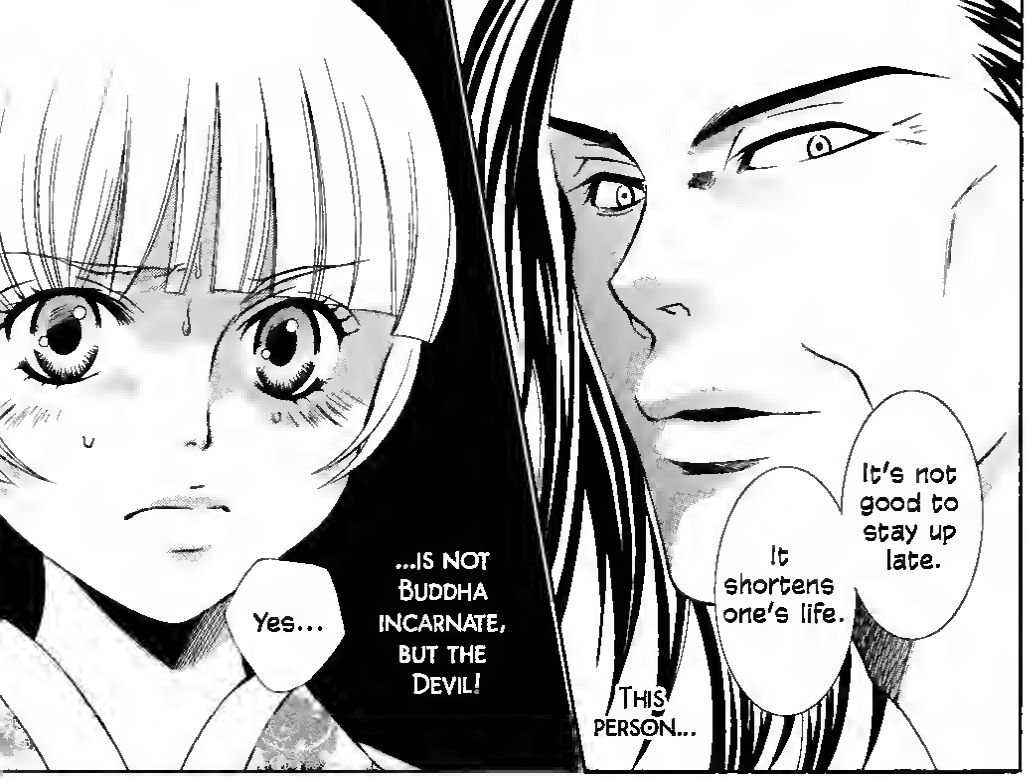
Who's there?!

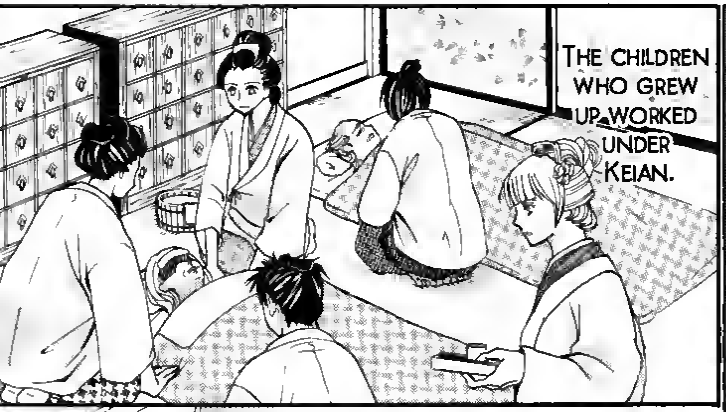
CREAK
Oh, no!

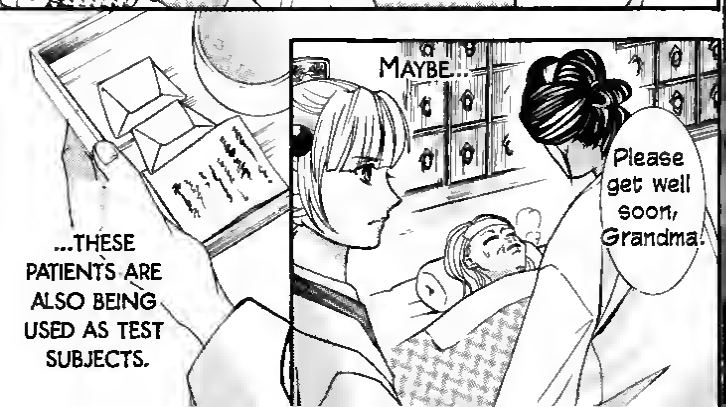
I HAVE TO ESCAPE!

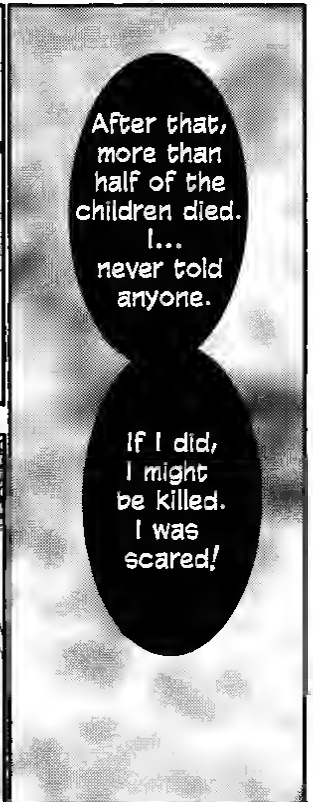
WHAT... ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?
WE WERE BEING FED POISON?!

Is that you, Akane?


It's not good to stay up late.
It shortens one's life.
THIS PERSON...
...IS NOT BUDDHA INCARNATE, BUT THE DEVIL!
Yes...


THE CHILDREN WHO GREW UP WORKED UNDER KEIAN.

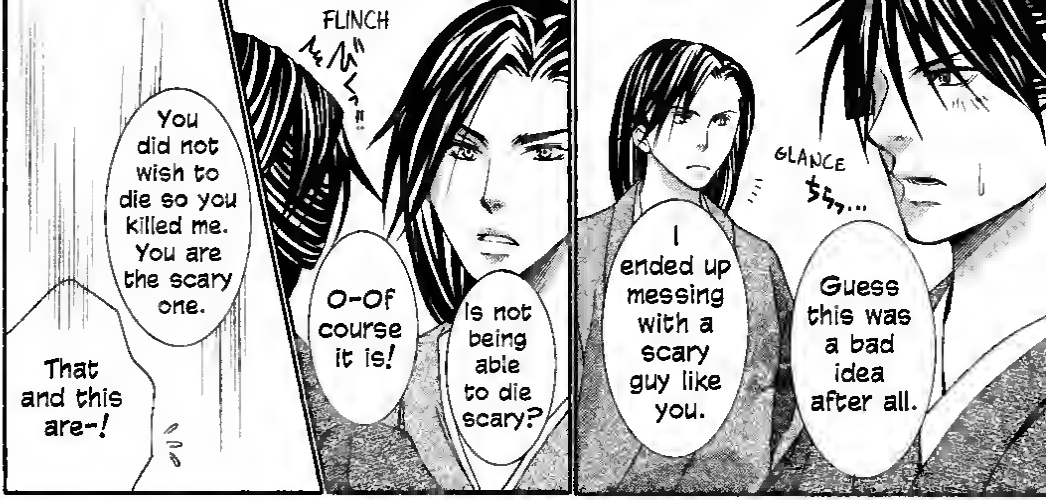

...THESE PATIENTS ARE ALSO BEING USED AS TEST SUBJECTS.
MAYBE...
Please get well soon, Grandma.


After that, more than half of the children died. I... never told anyone.
If I did, I might be killed. I was scared!

Doctor Keian said to bring her here.
She is the sole survivor of a village-wide epidemic.
THEN, ONE DAY...
Joukichi! What happened to that person?
She even lost her memory due to the shock.
...
It was strange. That village.
There were many houses, but no bodies.
It was as if the people just disappeared.
I KNEW IT! DOCTOR KEIAN MUST BE BEHIND IT!

I TOLD JOUKICHI EVERYTHING.
Don't joke around!
There's no way Doctor Keian would...
I'm telling the truth! Trust me!
I see.
You must've been scared, Akane.
Let's escape!

So, you set your sights on us.
If they find us, we're dead. We need decoys.
Let's find people that match our heights. We'll make it look like a robbery and kill them.
That's horrible! But to kill us and make us your decoys.
It won't change anything.
Me, too.
I'm sorry.
Wow. How honest.


FLINCH
You did not wish to die so you killed me. You are the scary one.
That and this are-!
O-Of course it is!
Is not being able to die scary?
GLANCE
I ended up messing with a scary guy like you.
Guess this was a bad idea after all.

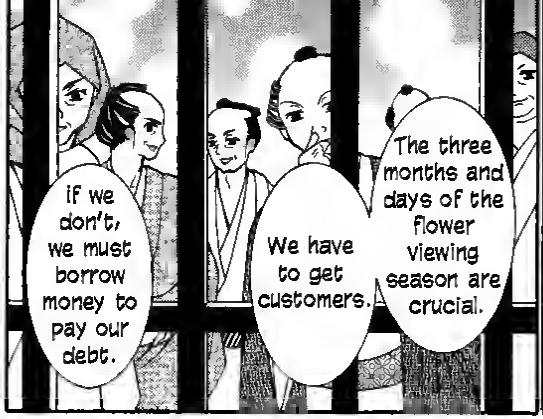
How troubling.
It seems there is a larger scheme at work.
That person is someone who makes one resort to such actions.
In other words ...

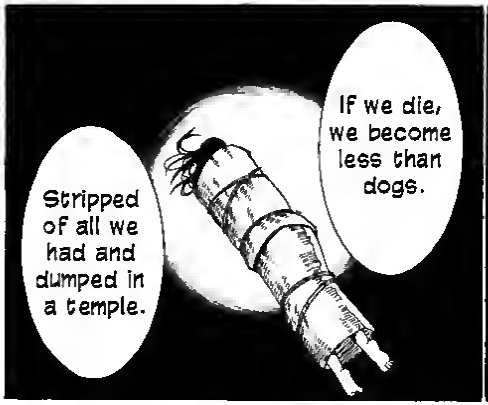
Ms. Ayano?
The woman Joukichi brought back. He likes her.
That's enough, Joukichi!
I knew it.
We shouldn't have left Ms. Ayano behind.

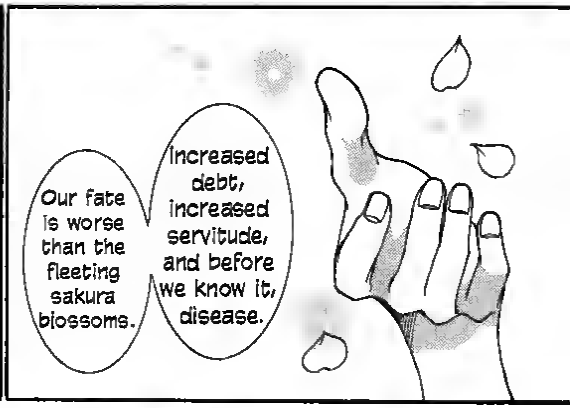
She's definitely being used!
Oh, really?
Akane!
How can we trust a woman with amnesia?
Though she might be Doctor Keian's accomplice.
You're wrong!
So?
What happened to the woman?
Fine! Joukichi, you idiot!
Do whatever you want!
RECOIL
If you keep going, I'll get angry.
GRAB

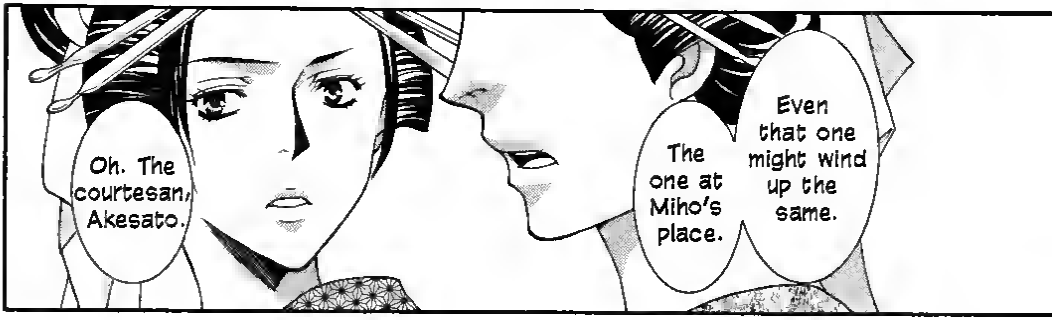
She's ...
...at a brothel under the name, Akesato.

EDO.
RED-LIGHT DISTRICT,
YOSHIWARA.
Come one, come all!
Please come closer and have a look!
The sakura blossoms are beautiful, aren't they?
Though they will soon wither away.
They bring one every year during the peak of the cherry blossom season.
Once it passes, they pull it out and clean up. Fleeting just like the cherry blossoms


If we don't, we must borrow money to pay our debt.
We have to get customers.
The three months and days of the flower viewing season are crucial.







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Love Beyond Time

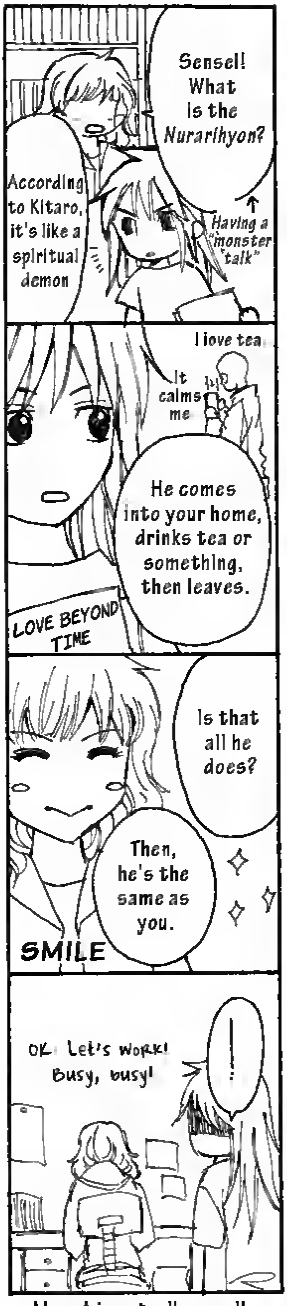
Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 3

She doesn't smile and hardly speaks.
Yet she captivates most of Yoshiwara's clientele.
What methods could she be using? Working non-stop destroys our bodies. If we don't work, it's also hell.
People call her Hell's Courtesan.
Akesato.
Oh, Akesato!
I wanted to see you again.
My lovely Akesato.
TO BE CONTINUED

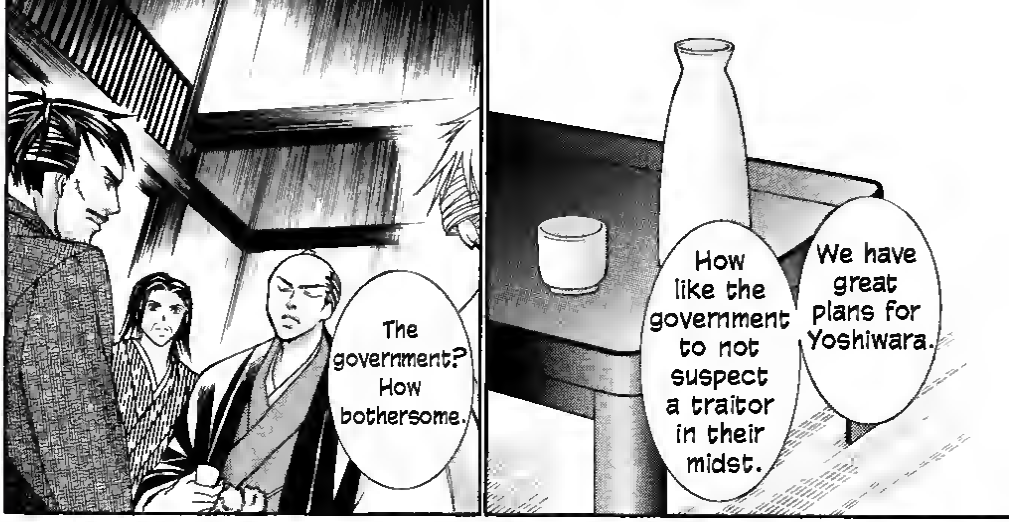
The heat of your body consumes me.
You are the first, Akesato ...
The world calls you Hell's Courtesan.
Yet why does it feel as if I am embracing an angel?

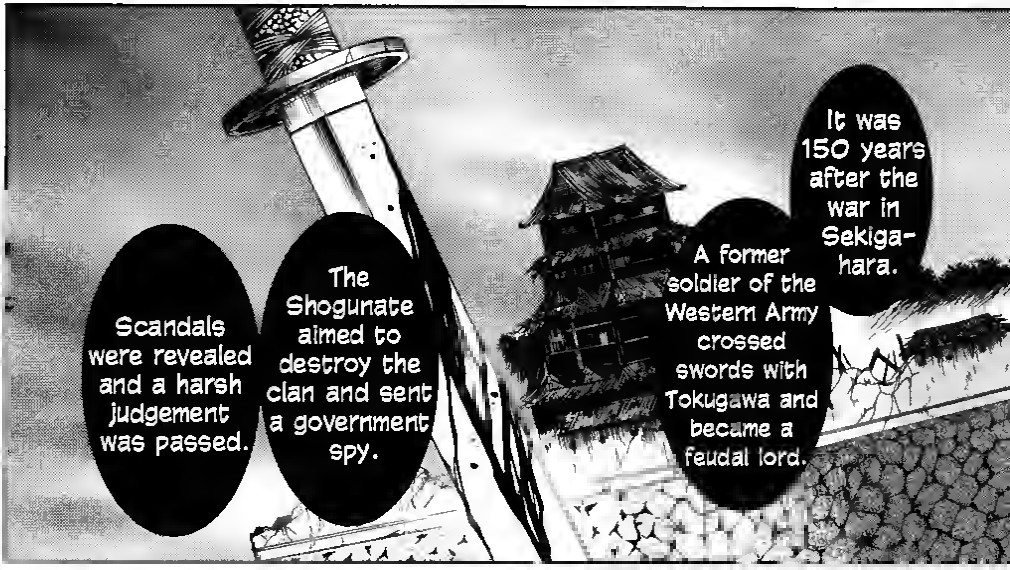
I cannot. For Master does not yet truly love me.
But, that is not enough. Just once!
Please bestow me with your smile!

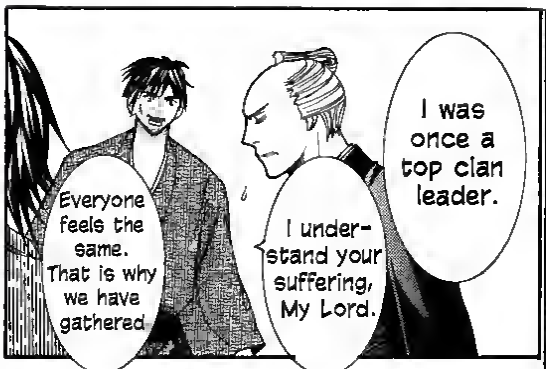
COMIC SHORT


Sensei! What is the Nurarihyon?
According to Kitaro, it's like a spiritual demon
Having a "monster talk"
I love tea
It calms me
He comes into your home, drinks tea or something, then leaves.
LOVE BEYOND TIME
Is that all he does?
Then, he's the same as you.
SMILE
OK. Let's work! Busy, busy!

Miss A is actually a really skilled assistant.


The government? How bothersome.
How like the government to not suspect a traitor in their midst.
We have great plans for Yoshiwara.


Scandals were revealed and a harsh judgement was passed.
The Shogunate aimed to destroy the clan and sent a government spy.
A former soldier of the Western Army crossed swords with Tokugawa and became a feudal lord.
It was 150 years after the war in Sekiga-hara.


Everyone feels the same. That is why we have gathered
I under-stand your suffering, My Lord.
I was once a top clan leader.

Houses were taken and destroyed. We became wandering samurai.

By the way, Keian.
The poisonous girl, Jigoku Dayu.
What is she?
Ah, yes.
We shall revive the Tokugawa!
We vow to overthrow the Shogunate!
I apologize for my lateness.
That woman's body was made with a special *ingredient*.
Once one embraces her, they can no longer do without *having her*.
Everything starts with coincidence. I want to make many more like her.
The Shogun's harem?!
Then send them into the Shogun's bed! I'll destroy the Shogunate from the inside!
That's outrageous! Are you sane?
Sanity or insanity...
Infiltrating his bedroom is the same as infiltrating the government.
CLATTER
What? Is it so the patrons will give more money?
No. That was a coincidental outcome.
CLATTER

The one with Jigoku Dayu right now is the young lord of the Kishuu-Tokugawa clan.
I will ensnare him and manipulate him for our needs.
COMMOTION
ガヤガヤ
How...?
Let's talk in more detail next time, shall we?
Now, then. I shall excuse myself.
It will be fine. She has amnesia.
What if that woman divulges information ...?
Is it safe?
Doctor Keian.
PEEK

What a strange man.
I heard he was once a head physician. Everything else is a mystery.
He is not only a master of medicine, but also of curses.
Having him as an ally is to our advantage.
I see.
So that woman was sold to Yoshiwara.
Yes.
That was two months ago.
He must've taken advantage of her amnesia.
THOSE BROTHEL OWNERS WERE ACQUAINTANCES OF DOCTOR KEIAN.

Understand? She is not to entertain vulgar customers.
Sell her as every man's fantasy woman.
Of course.
Here. Your medicine.
You must take it every day.
THAT MEDICINE IS...?!
Ah, Joukichi.
Cleaning the yard? Or do you have the same hobby as Akane?

That's right! I couldn't do anything!
He probably knew we were planning to run away, too!
Ms. Ayano was then taken away?
We should stop with the life stories.
Look outside.
It seems you were right.
What should we do?!
We'll get killed!
!!
Assassins!
How can we go against that many?!

Are you crazy?!
!
Wha-?
Then how about you both die as planned?
Seeing your dead bodies should stop them.
It is the quickest way.

?!
You two are?
RUSH
RUSH
Listening in on private conversations.
You leave me no choice.
BAM

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

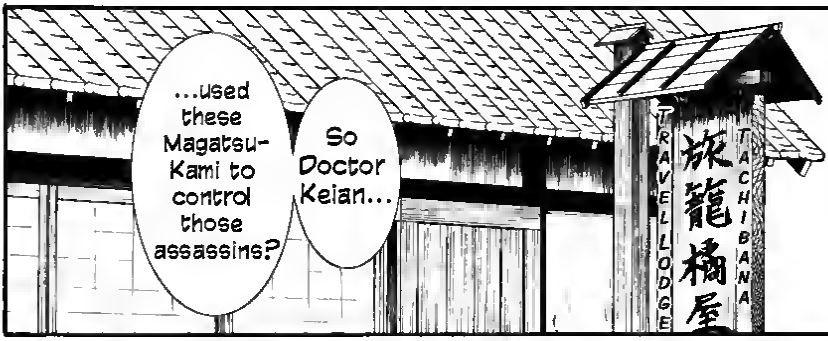
Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 4

This is bad. My sword cannot kill humans.
There are also many scratches.
?!
Hey! Why me?!
Here, Setona.
You are better at it.
LOOKS AWAY
Geez!
!
DASH
VIBRATE
What's going on?!
These people are possessed!
VIBRATE
FWISH
Huh? Magatsu-Kami?!
Why, you!
Whoa!

What is the meaning of this ?!
This can't be!
COLLAPSE
UGGHHH...
SWSSHHH
It appears so.
Ha ha...
Amazing!
HUFF
HUFF
Everyone! Retreat!

What's going on?
The Magatsu-Kami-slaying sword and...
...it's user. To appear before me is...
The flesh has rotted.
How could this happen?
They appear to be corpses.
Yeah. They turned to dust as soon as I cut them.

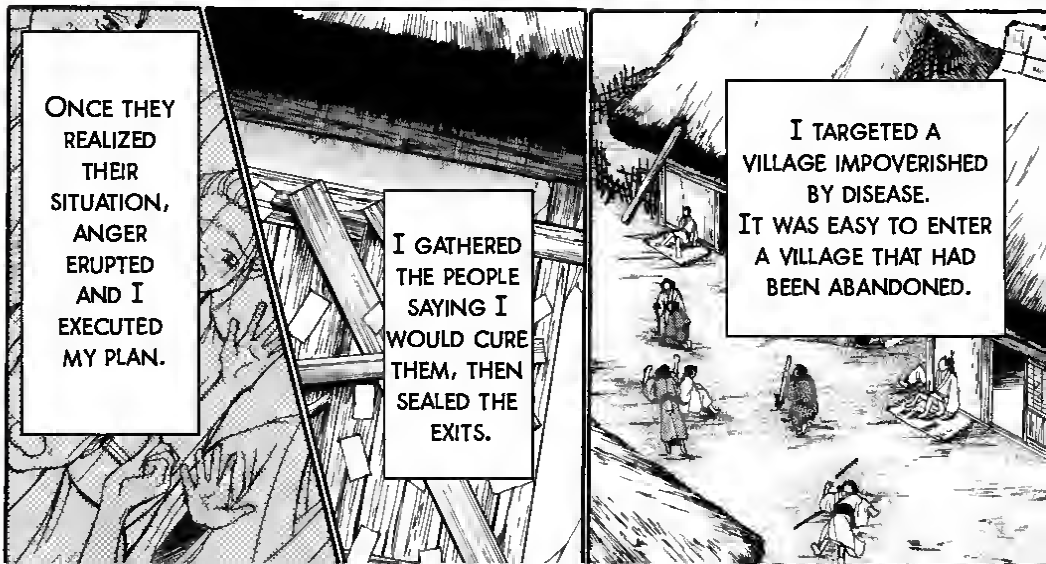
MOUNTAIN OF BODIES.
You scare too easily.
Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!
Oh my god!
WIPE
Oh, right. You guys can get up now.


...used these Magatsu-Kami to control those assassins?
So Doctor Keian...
TRAVEL LODGE
旅籠
TACHIBANA
橘屋

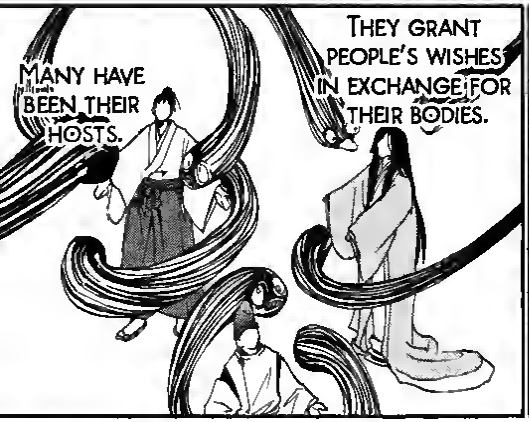
No. It is my duty to destroy them.
...you two got caught up in this.
Sorry, because of us...
The Magatsu-Kami are not prone to possessing corpses.
That has yet to be determined.
Someone must be controlling them.

I see you are in high spirits, Keian.
That woman in Yoshiwara is a problem.
He's right.
You must hurry if you wish to save her.
I finally found what I was searching for.
Did something good happen?
That reminds me, I have come here to...
AS USUAL, YOU ARE FULL OF MYSTERY, KEIAN.
I see.
I plan to obtain it soon.

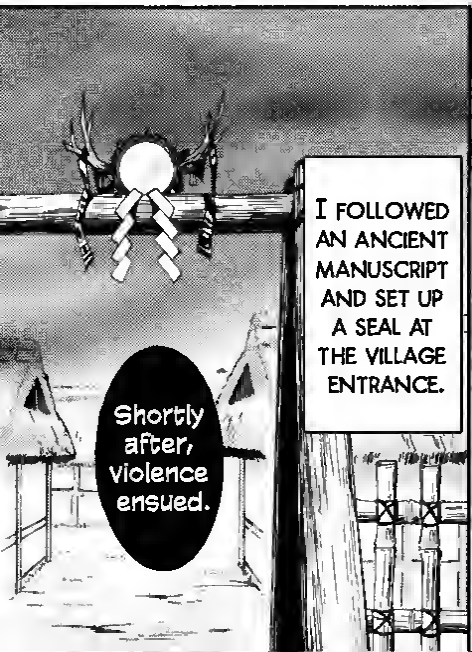
Yes, of course.
Regarding the poisonous girl, correct?
Kodoku?
Does My Lord know if it?
A curse used on insects or small animals.
Trap them together in one place. Starving, they will start to eat each other.
Full of the other's blood and hatred, the survivor becomes the strongest curse.
I tried accomplishing that with humans.


I TARGETED A VILLAGE IMPOVERISHED BY DISEASE. IT WAS EASY TO ENTER A VILLAGE THAT HAD BEEN ABANDONED.
I GATHERED THE PEOPLE SAYING I WOULD CURE THEM, THEN SEALED THE EXITS.
ONCE THEY REALIZED THEIR SITUATION, ANGER ERUPTED AND I EXECUTED MY PLAN.

Creatures lured by the villagers' cries.
What in the world?!
Then, *they* appeared.


Many have been their hosts.
They grant people's wishes in exchange for their bodies.

I later discovered that they were spirits once sealed in a northern village. The *Magatsu-Kami*.


I followed an ancient manuscript and set up a seal at the village entrance.
Shortly after, violence ensued.

So I thought, why not try using them?

...EXCEPT FOR ONE WOMAN.
WHO?! WHO TRAPPED US HERE?!
THE PEOPLE STARTED KILLING EACH OTHER IN STARVATION.
ARE YOU SACRIFICES ?!
I THEN TRAPPED THOSE THINGS IN WITH THEM.
THAT WOMAN WAS THE SOLE SURVIVOR.
EVERYONE DIED...
SHE ASSIMILATED WITH THE MAGATSU-KAMI AND KILLED EVERYONE. HER BODY SOAKED IN BLOOD.
I wish to borrow your powers.
THAT WAS MY OBJECTIVE.
YOU!
WHY DID YOU SEAL US HERE?!
So, it is over.

Then, you will remain sealed here.
WE CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH SUCH BODIES!
Possess those corpses and obey my commands.
OBEYING MY COMMANDS WITHOUT QUESTION. MY PERSONAL ARMY.
Both her memory and her identity ... were lost when she assimilated with the Magatsu-Kami. ...
Why was she the only survivor?
WE SHALL ACCEPT...
THE DEMONS REMAIN LOYAL TO THE CONTRACTS THEY MAKE.
The demon's body is female so the male's *organ* is the offering. While taking in their essence, she makes them her captives.
Many sacrifices were needed to create her.
With this, I was able to build myself an undead army and a demon girl.

Look!
That's her over there!
Ms. Ayano. Beautiful, isn't she?
THAT WOMAN IS...!
Yes...

She is indeed very beautiful.
However, she is a woman beyond your grasp.
Why?!
Because she works here? But, that's because of Keian!
吉原仲之町
YOSHIHARA NAKANOMACHI

Let's go. You have something to tell her, right?
Wha-? That's... No, wait!
That is not what I mean. Well, never mind.
"I want to speak to her. OK, let's go."
It's not that simple. Meeting her requires a ton of money.

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 5

Forget it.
Do you like Joukichi, Akane?
!!
I like Joukichi ?!
Sorry. Acting jealous won't solve anything.
Darn. You got me.
But, this is a secret. OK?
He likes Ms. Ayano.
I'm fine with being friends.
Wh- What?!
キュッ
SQUEEZE
キュッ
HUG

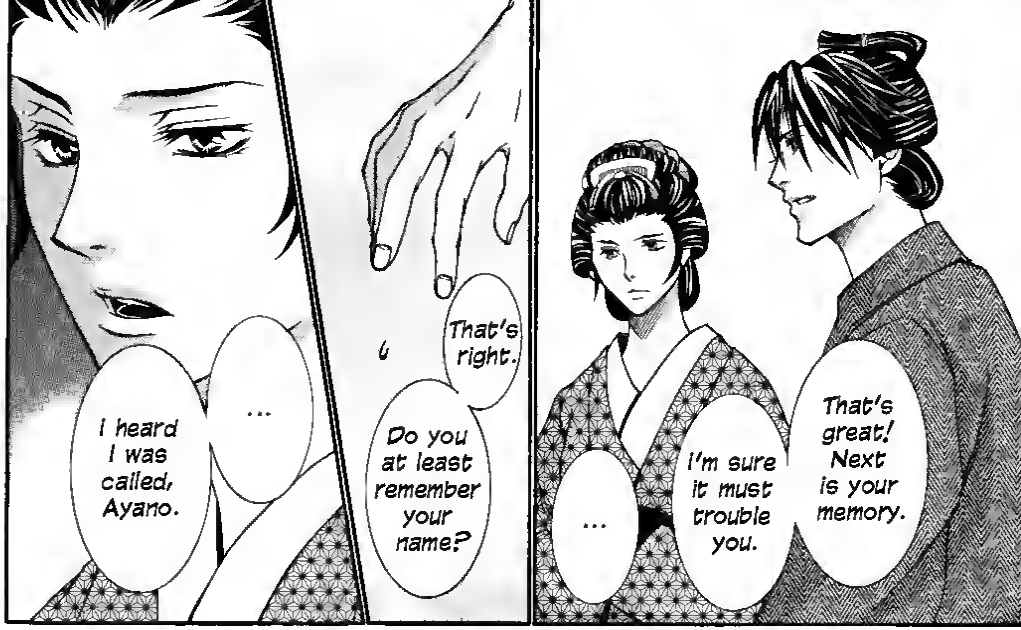
Setona ...
There are feelings you just can't forget.
Isn't love mysterious?
Neither measured by time nor the number of memories.
MANIBE...
Akane is strong.
You face your feelings honestly.

You've also been through a lot. But you're happy now, right?
Huh?
EVEN SO. THAT MEMORY IS WHAT KEEPS ME GOING.
THE BEAUTIFUL TIME I HAD SPENT WITH YOU LONG, LONG AGO...
...IS NOW BUT A FLEETING MEMORY.

LOVERS?!
Y-You're wrong! We're just traveling together!
Rai. I thought he was scary, but he's actually kind. You're lovers, right?
I guess so.
He's a good guy. He saved us after all.
Is that right?
WHAT ABOUT ME?
RAI IS CHANGING LITTLE BY LITTLE.
A GOOD GUY, HUH.
WHISPER
He used to be even more unsociable.
I can see that!

I WONDER IF I'VE CHANGED, TOO.
I DON'T KNOW.
THE TIMES WHERE I'M NOT THINKING OF MANIBE ARE INCREASING. THAT HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
I WANT TO SEE YOU, MANIBE.
I FEEL LIKE I'M STARTING TO BECOME ANOTHER PERSON.
PLOP
ポト
You think I want to be like this?! If only I had some money...
HICCUP
FOOD
SAKE
Dammit!

How about finding another woman?
I wouldn't be sufferin' like this if I could!
What about your friend? Haven't you always been together?
Huh? Akane? No way!
Akane is cute...
...like a little sister. I'm sure she feels the same.
To me, she's my close family.
Ms. Ayano is different.
At first, I thought she was hard to deal with, but...
Is it all right for you to be outside? Are you okay?
Yes. I feel better.


That's great! Next is your memory.
I'm sure it must trouble you.
...
That's right.
Do you at least remember your name?
...
I heard I was called, Ayano.

Ayano. That's a good name.
It makes no difference.

The feeling of forgetting everything precious. It's pitiful.
Pitiful?

Why not?
It might help jog your memory.
Think about it.

CRAP! I MESSED UP!
No, wait.
I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way.
How should I put it?

I'M DIGGING MY OWN GRAVE HERE.
Memories are, um, precious things that can support you.
Thank you.
I appreciate you worrying about me.
I WAS CAPTIVATED BY HER SMILE.
I STARTED TO TALK TO HER MORE AFTER THAT.
SHE WOULD ALWAYS SMILE WHILE LISTENING TO ME.
BUT, ONE DAY...
I got some candy, and thought...
Ms. Ayano?!

WAVER
I'm thirsty.
What's wrong?! Are you sick?!
I can't stand it!
I'm so thirsty!
Hey! Ms. Ayano?!
KI
A!!
CLATTER
Ms. Ayano, what-?
SUCH STRENGTH!

Get out.
Huh?
Get out! Don't ever come here again!
What a weak drunk.
Hey, wake up! We're just getting started!
Check out my drawing of Jigoku Dayu!
Didn't I say I'd let you meet her if you won?!
I never got another chance to speak to her again.
I wanted to ask about what happened that day.
Dammit! I've... reached my limit.
撃沈。
UTTER DEFEAT

The winner gets to meet Jigoku Dayu?
How can you people be so weak?
Isn't there anyone who can compete with me?
That's right.
Then, I will be your opponent.
All right! ♪

It is almost time to close tonight's viewing!
MIHO-YA
美浦屋
Always trying to attract clients.
This town, so full of corrupt desires, suits you well.
That said...
You took in too much at once.

Take their essence in small doses.
Don't let this happen in the bed of Tokugawa.
You've left quite a mess.
I...
Here. Smoke this and forget.

時遡路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 6

EACH PUFF I TAKE MAKES IT EVEN FUZZIER.
MY HEAD FEELS FUZZY.
I'VE LOST MY MEMORY.
MY NAME WAS EVEN CHOSEN FOR ME.
SOMETIMES I HAVE DREAMS. I WONDER WHO HE IS.
I WONDER WHO AM I.
EVEN IF I KILL SOMEONE, I FEEL NOTHING.
INSTEAD...

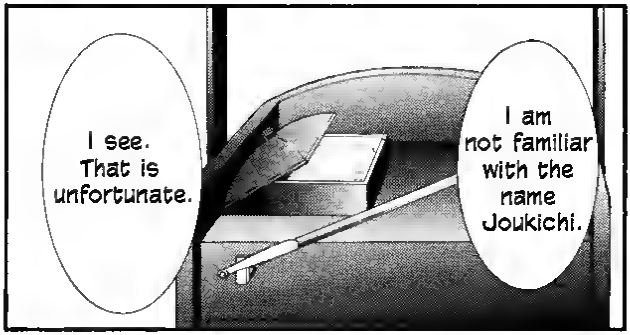
RATTLE
ガタ…
Mistress Akesato.
Yes?
It is regarding the master painter.
He has brought with him a guest.
A guest?
...I FEEL AN UNBEARABLE THIRST IN MY THROAT AND BODY.
TO QUENCH THAT THIRST...
Someone is searching for me?
Hey, Ms. Dayu. Sorry, but I'm not here for work today.
I lost to this guy here in a drinking match.
That would be my pleasure.
The wager was you, so please take care of him.

☐ Jigoku Dayu: Hell's Courtesan ☐ (Continued)

The name Jigoku Dayu was from a courtesan who existed during the Muromachi Period (I think). She was said to have been a wise woman who had conversed with high priests! Of course, the Jigoku Dayu in this story has no relation to the one in history. I chose her name from the image it gave and her poisonous body. I remember this story being the most popular story from that time.

For the Edo story arc, I pretty much had my assistant Ms. A stay over the whole time as we drew non-stop. The red spider lily in the last section was drawn in very fine detail. Having that image on a two-page spread gave the effect that I wanted, which made me happy. *Love Beyond Time*'s story continues to the beginning of the Showa period. I think that last scene will leave an impression!

From the latter half of the Edo arc, I felt the artwork changing more and more. I'd be happy if that was a sign of my drawing skills gradually improving. I've always admired action or sword fighting scenes and put one in the story, but Rai turned out looking like a demon... (laughs)

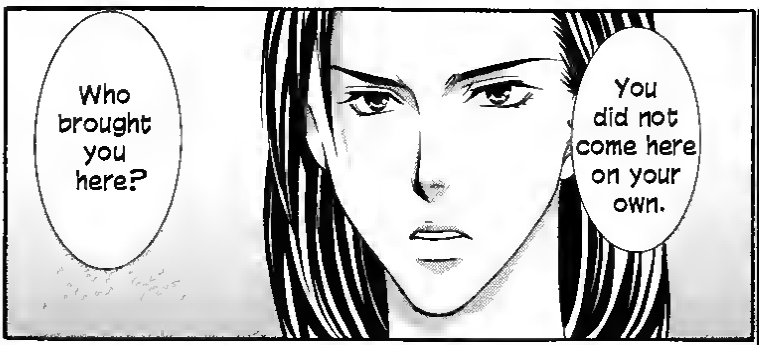


THUMP
No. I came here for other reasons.
I feel sorry for Joukichi, but I have a duty.
What?
SLIDE
?!

I will have you regain your memories.
GRAB
HI

As expected, the sword has no effect.
STAB
What connection do your memories have with the Magatsu-Kami?
WHAT?
I...
WHERE... IS THAT?
THAT SWORD MAKES ME FEEL STRANGE.
WHAT IS HE SAYING? MAGATSU... KAMI? I FEEL SICK...
OHHHH ...
OHH ...

I...
THAT DAY...
I killed everyone!
AHH!


Who brought you here?
You did not come here on your own.

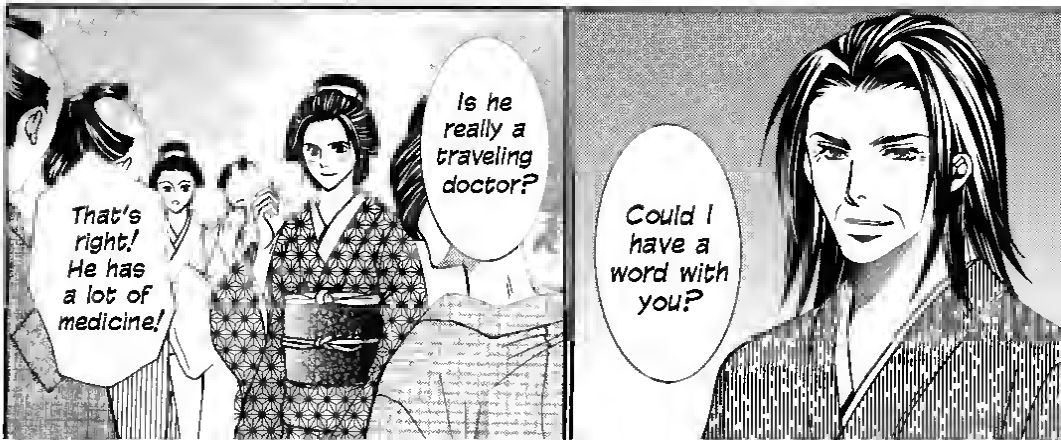
Take your time.
What happened?

I forgot?
There must be something in it.
You should also stop smoking that.

Is it a man named Keian?
Yes.
I... forgot everything!
It was all that man's doing!
I remember now.
THE VILLAGE I WAS BORN IN WAS PROSPEROUS.
BUT A FLOOD CONTAMINATED OUR WATER WITH DISEASE.
THE DISEASE SPREAD QUICKLY.
MOURNING
Father ...
Mother!

MY BROTHER AND I WERE STILL HEALTHY.
FOR THE SAKE OF MY FAMILY AND VILLAGE, I COULDN'T REST.
COUGH
Ms. Ayano ...
Please. Rub my hands and legs...
Ms. Ayano. Water ...

Excuse me, Miss.
Don't cry, Jiro! Be strong and smile!
WAAAHHHH
WAAAHHHH


That's right! He has a lot of medicine!
Is he really a traveling doctor?
Could I have a word with you?

I BELIEVED HIM WITHOUT QUESTION.
Why are the doors closed, Ms. Ayano?
The medicinal fumes will be more effective this way.
Right? Doctor Keian?
Yes, that is correct.
THANK GOODNESS. WITH THIS, EVERYONE WILL...
Now, then. You too, Miss.
What? But I'm fi-
SLAM
バタン!!
?!
WHAT IS GOING ON?!
SHOVE
ドン
Get in.

CLAMOR
Hey. Isn't this strange?
I thought so since the beginning.
The door... won't open!
it can only be opened from the out-side.
CLAMOR
Ms. Ayano.
That doctor. Something is not right.

BUSTLE
You're wrong!
I didn't know anything!
You tricked us!

GUAAAA
Move!
Let go of me!
THEIR ANGER TOWARDS ME DROVE THEM AGAINST EACH OTHER AS THEY TRIED TO ESCAPE.

Wait, Jiro...
!...
Urrgh.

時遍路

LOVE BEYOND TIME

CHAPTER 3: JIGOKU DAYU - HELL'S COURTESAN 7

Uwaahh!
What are those things?!
Mon... sters...
Monsters?!
SO, DEVOUR...
...THIS FOOLISH HEART.
I'M THE ONE WHO BELIEVED THAT MAN'S LIE AND INVITED THIS HORROR.
Kill me!

I WANTED TO DIE.
So I surrendered myself to the monsters.
But I awoke in a sea of blood, having forgotten everything.
Doctor Keian said I had been possessed and killed everyone.
That medicine prevented me from taking revenge ...
...and made me forget everything besides what he told me.
Unforgiveable!
That man, and me who believed him.
I want him to suffer!
Worse than everyone in my village!
FWOSSSHH
Stop it.
Or the Magatsu-Kami will take over again.

WHY FORCE ME TO REMEMBER...
...did you use that sword?
Why...
EVEN NOW, I ACHE WITH THIRST.
Why did you make me remember?
...THE WRETCHED MONSTER I'VE BECOME?
It's too late. We are now one.
My duty is to destroy the Magatsu-Kami.

What?
I will devour them.
DEVOUR?
The Magatsu-Kami in your body.
Jigoku Dayu.
We are the same.

EVERYTHING AFTER WAS A BLUR.
EXCEPT FOR HIS HANDS... HIS SKIN...

...HOW OUR BODIES INTERTWINED...
WHEN I REGAINED MY SENSES...
...AND THE SENSATION OF MELTING FROM THE HEAT.
THE PAIN...
...THE THIRST...
...ALL DISAPPEARED.

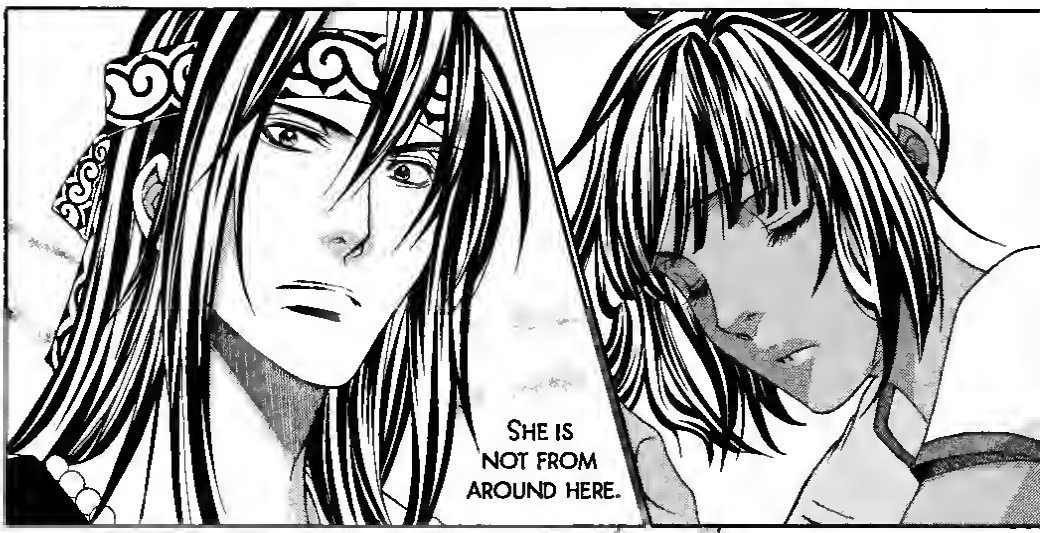
MY MIND FEELS SO CLEAR.
The Magatsu-Kami.
Did you remove them from my body?
Temporarily. A few remain.
Has your mind cleared?
Should they take over again, then...
Then?
Drink.
What?

A shrine?
It's the same as *that*.
The Magatsu-Kami are similar. Humans being the "offering."
Present an offering, make a wish, and clap your hands.
!...
And the sake?
Like you.
But once they assimilate, the Magatsu-Kami gain control.
They grant the wishes and desires of their masters.
It eases the mind.
Call it an offering.
!

It calms the Magatsu-Kami in your body.
The anger. The thirst.
The sorrow.
Should the time come when you can no longer stand it.
Kill yourself.
You said we were the same.
Are you not afraid?
Tell me. What are the Magatsu-Kami?
!
I do not fear them.
For we are old comrades.

Old... comrades?
Yes.
Long, long ago.
Perhaps from time immemorial, my village existed.

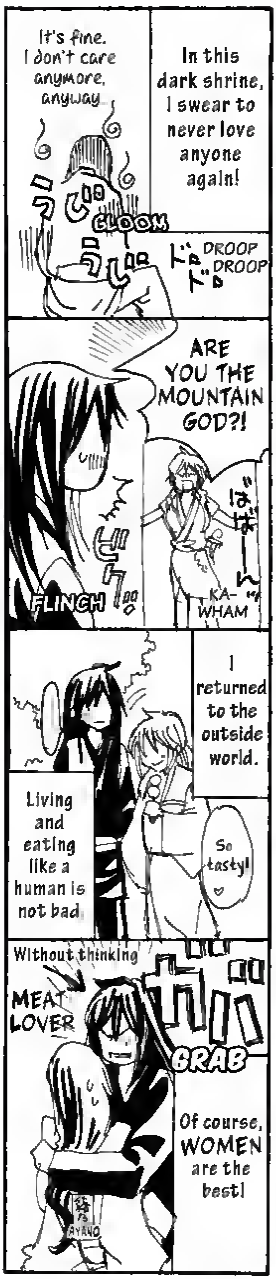
A COMMON, PEACEFUL VILLAGE.
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WAS THE ABILITIES WE INHERITED IN OUR BLOOD.
I see.
The Yamato Clan has advanced?
What about our village?
We should maintain vigilance.
How frightening!
They mustn't gain our powers!
Our village has protected them for generations!
They are conquering all in their path.
Slowly, but it is certain.



CHAPTER 3: JIGOKU DAYU - HELL'S COURTESAN 8

Hinaki hates the Yamato Clan!
I see. You must have suffered.
Everyone scattered and escaped
Hinaki's village was invaded by the Yamato Clan
Our village may be attacked as well.
We shall pray that you find someplace safe.
What is your name?
Can Hinaki stay here forever?
Hinaki has no where else to go.
I'm sorry. That is not possible.
I will be next door.
Well, you may stay and rest for tonight.

Hey!
Are you a warrior, Rai? Nice sword.
With this, the Yamato Clan is nothing!
SO, SHE INTENDS TO PLAY INNOCENT.
My name is Rai.
You cannot stay here forever.
That is not for fighting.
It puts the souls of the dead to rest.
The... dead?
When one dies, their soul leaves the body
This sword sends them to heaven
That is my duty.
Duty... Hinaki has one too!
Hinaki dances to make everyone happy!
TUG


THINGS I LIKE
It's fine. I don't care anymore, anyway
In this dark shrine, I swear to never love anyone again!
GLOOM
DROOP DROOP
ARE YOU THE MOUNTAIN GOD?!
FLINCH
KA- WHAM
I returned to the outside world.
Living and eating like a human is not bad
So tasty!
Without thinking
MEAT LOVER
GRAB
Of course, WOMEN are the best!

Is it from her country? It makes me want to join in.
That kind of dance is new.

Great! Hinaki is happy, too!
This village has not been this festive in some time.
You are a mysterious girl, Hinaki.
BEFORE LONG, HINAKI WAS ACCEPTED IN THE VILLAGE.
Mother can go to Heaven now.
Thank you, Rai.

We make a living out of the powers we were born with.
There are those who can influence fire, water or wind.
MY DUTY IS HIGHLY RESPECTED.
Are you scared?
This is... Rai's duty.
What?
Really? Then everyone must be relieved.
There is someone to guide them to Heaven!
Isn't that great?
YET THERE ARE ALSO MANY WHO FEAR IT.
My power is to guide the souls of the dead.
The name Rai also means death.

Because of Rai, everyone can live fully.
Rai's duty is amazing! Rai is amazing!
Is that so?

BEFORE I REALIZED IT, TWO MONTHS HAD PASSED.
Half the villagers and I will be gone until the next full moon.
If you need anything, feel free to ask someone.

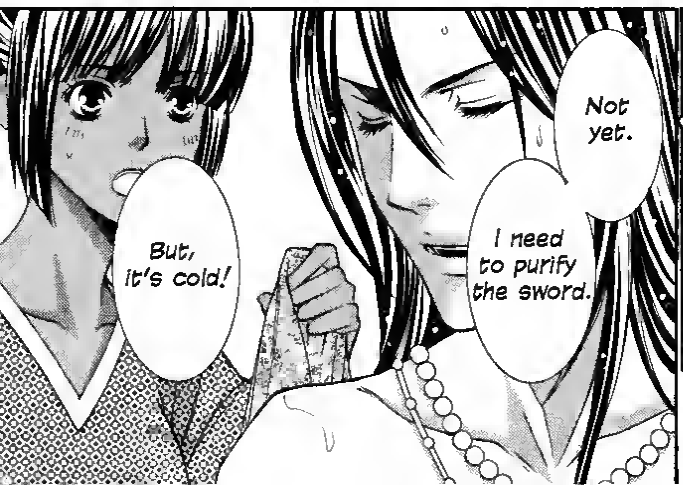
AS A SNAKE SHEDS IT'S OLD SKIN AND EMERGES ANEW...
...WE UNDERGO A RITE OF PURIFICATION EVERY YEAR TO RESTORE OUR POWERS.
CREAK
ギ…
A LONG-TIME CUSTOM.
Then, I am off.
Got it! I'll be waiting!
FROM THE THIRD NEW MOON TO THE NEXT FULL MOON, WE PRAY AND WAIT.
The moon is finally full.
It always seems so long.
I have returned.

DID SHE... LEAVE?
IT IS NOT LIKE WE MADE ANY PROMISES.
My name is Rai.
HUFF
HUFF
Oh, Rai!
I went to gather food in case you were hungry.
Um, Rai?

Really?
That is the taste of Hinaki's country.
Yes.
I have never tasted anything like it.
Is it good?
I see.
The country Hinaki was born...
...was warm with flowers. A beautiful place.
I miss it.

Should we go together?
Huh?
There must be a lot of good food there.
Yeah, let's go!
I'll take you, Rai!
I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE.
Then it's settled.
I LOVED HER. I NEVER IMAGINED SUCH A FATE AWAITED US.
I STARED INTO THE EARNEST EYES LOOKING BACK AT ME.

Hey, Rai!


But, it's cold!
I need to purify the sword.
Not yet.

PITTER PATTER
You'll catch a cold!
Here. Dry yourself.

時遡路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 9

JUST LOOKING AT EACH OTHER MADE US CONTENT.
I love you, Hinaki.
I... love too, Rai.
Rai, let's go.
What's wrong?
Hurry!
FLINCH
ビク

THE TIME FOR PURIFICATION CAME AGAIN.
It's sure long.
HINAKI?
All right.
It's dangerous at night.
So let's go, OK?

You have Hinaki waiting for you, too.
But, I want to eat my wife's cooking!
We should pray.
The worst is the fasting.

MARRY?
I'm sorry.
You! Concentrate!
Stop talking!
You look good together. When will you marry?
You've changed since she came.

DASH
BANG
I WILL ASK HINAKI ONCE I RETURN...
What's going on? Is it the village?
BANG
Halt! Visitors are not permitted during the sacred ritual!
Do you wish to be punished?
Someone leaked information to the Yamato Clan!
Th-There's no time for that! The village is being attacked!
Rai!

These people possess strange powers.
Kill everyone. Leave no survivors.
This is...!
Wha-? Hinaki?!
I'm sorry, Rai.
Forgive me.
FLAP

SLASH
Why...?
Lies!
GUAAHH!
STAB
Rai! No!!
You said you'd set me free if I told you about the village!
You lied! You said you wouldn't kill Rai or the villagers!
Are you a fool? Who makes promises to a prisoner?
Your country now belongs to us.
I have no more use for you.
What?

R-Rai...
I'm... sorry.
Don't talk! It's fine, Hinaki.
Hinaki !!
Don't worry. I'll give you a quick death.
You can join that man in the afterlife!
But... I fell in love with you.
Hinaki's real duty was to guide the army here.
I wanted... to go back with you.
Hina... ki...
SPLATTER

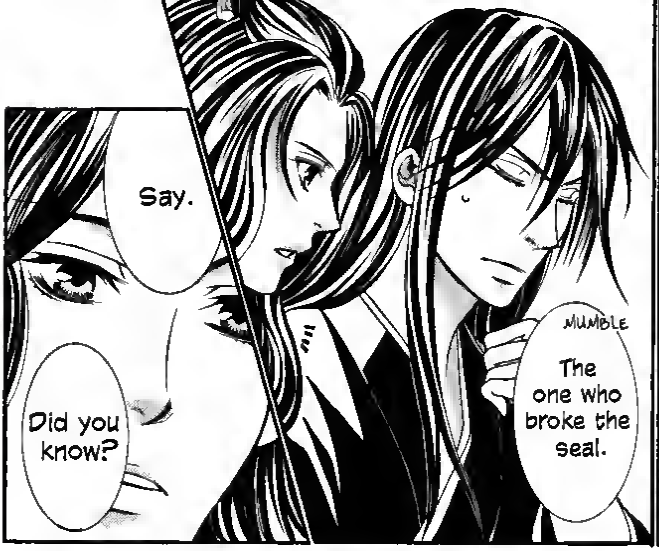
RAI!
RAI! YOU CAN'T DIE!
SLUMP
I'VE LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD.
Hina... ki...
IF YOU DIE, WHO WILL SEND US TO HEAVEN?
OUR SOULS...
WE WON'T LET YOU DIE!
WAVER
OUR REGRETS! OUR ANGER! OUR SUFFERING!
SOME ONE...
WE WON'T LET YOU GO. YOU CAN'T DIE!
WE WILL GIVE THE LAST OF OUR POWERS TO YOU!
YOUR PUNISHMENT FOR BRINGING THAT GIRL TO OUR VILLAGE...
This is...?

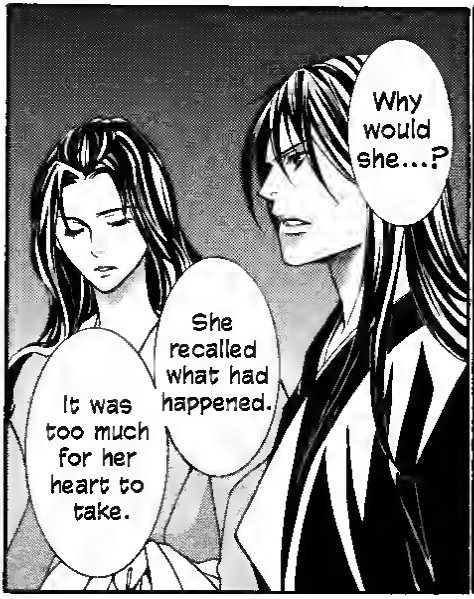
I SURVIVED. MY WOUNDS ALSO HEALED.
WOOSH
...WILL BE TO WATCH OVER OUR SOULS FOR ALL ETERNITY!
CHUCKLE
I am alive.
CHUCKLE
WAVER
Born from death, yet unable to die.
Agghhh!
Come. Follow me.
DRAG

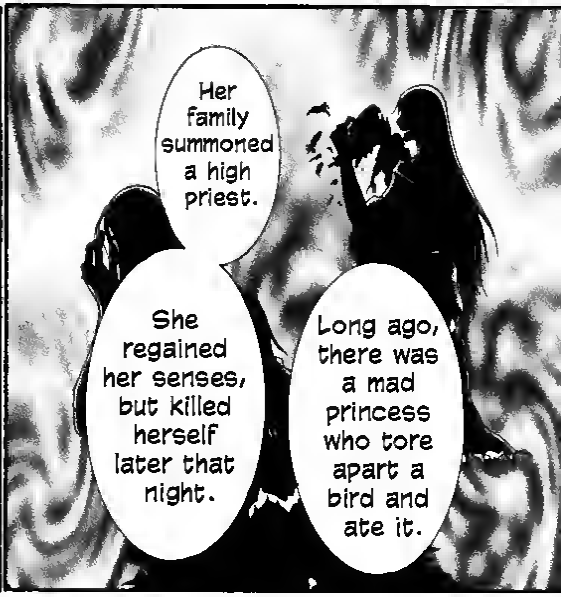
There will be no sun or flowers, but we'll always be together, Hinaki...
In the darkest depths of the cave...
My comrades... Your hatred and anger...
...have corrupted your souls, but I shall not abandon you.
So you won't stray, follow me. Revere me like a god.
...I shall offer you my blood, flesh and life.
Time continued to pass.

My comrades had forgotten themselves.
Their resentment transforming them into the Magatsu-Kami.
Even the last fragment of Hinaki had turned into dust.
But then...
The darkness suddenly...
Are you the mountain god?!
...came to an end.

When the shrine's seal broke, they fled to the outside world.
That was the origin of the Magatsu-Kami.
Un... dead.
That is my eternal duty as an undead.
It is too late to purify or seal them.
So, I must kill them.
Each offering further corrupting their desires.
Before that, human sacrifices were offered to the shrine.






Her family summoned a high priest.
She regained her senses, but killed herself later that night.
Long ago, there was a mad princess who tore apart a bird and ate it.

時遠路

Love Beyond Time

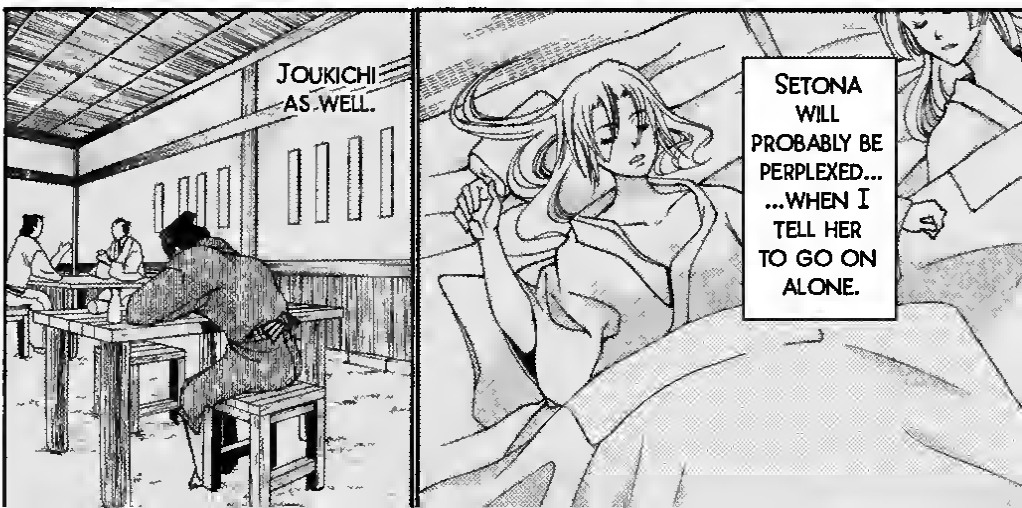
Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 10

!
Then, do you want to come with me?
I feel like I will be crushed by the memories.
My past and my deceased brother...
I am afraid.
Then...
When I lose control ...
I will keep watch over you.
Then come with me.
If you are afraid to be alone.
What?

I won't let you lose control.
You shall use this sword...
...and kill me.
Ah!
THIS IS NEITHER LOVE NOR SYMPATHY.
IT IS MERELY CARNAL DESIRE.

Heat.
Sweat.
Breath.
This town is just the same.
And their savage struggle to fulfill their desires.
Anger
Suffering
Raw instinct
Oppressive feelings inter-mingle.

Losing the warmth that you embraced.
Was my decision wrong?
Wait for my return.
Holding your breath as you crowd together.
Firmly locked inside a confined space.


Joukichi as well.
Setona will probably be perplexed... ...when I tell her to go on alone.

I drank way too much.
My head's killing me...
Where's Rai?
Getting drunk after faking your death?
TAP
You are such an ungrateful child, Joukichi.
DOCTOR KEIAN!
The man who was with you. Where is he?
I told you I don't know! I was drunk!
Then you leave me no choice.
Will this ...
... make you talk?

He saved me! And he's staying at the same inn!
How are you two connected?
I'm telling... the truth!
GRIND GRIND
AGGHHHH!
He was your benefactor.
I see.
Your benefactor or your parent. The choice is yours.
Only... That choice may end up being your last.
Go steal that man's sword and bring it to me.
WHAT?

I understand.
Ayano ?
Oh, you mean Jigoku Dayu.
!
Can I ask one thing?
About Ms. Ayano ...
Have you fallen for her? Fine.
I will let you meet her if you bring me the sword.
I SAID THAT, BUT...
HEY, THAT'S ...
I CAN'T STEAL RAI'S SWORD. HE SAVED ME AFTER ALL.

MS. AYANO... AND RAI?!
EVEN WITHOUT THE SEAL, THEY SHALL OBEY MY EVERY COMMAND!
Once I have it...
...I will have gained absolute control!
The thing the Magatsu-Kami most fear. That sword.
Ha ha.
Ha.
Ha ha...

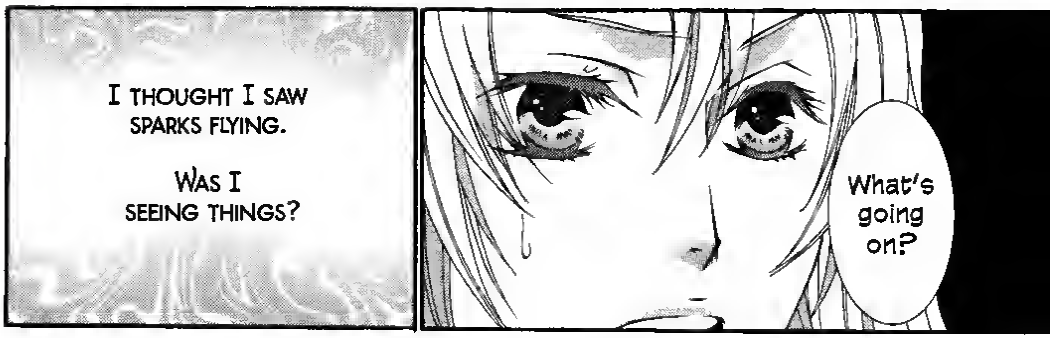
I COULDN'T CALL OUT TO RAI.
Not only will I conquer the Shogunate! But the entire world!
Are you here to possess me?!
I SEE YOU ARE SUFFERING.
SWOOSH
WHY DID HE GO WITHOUT ME?
DID HE PASS MY MESSAGE TO HER? OR...
NO. THAT WILL ONLY GET ME KILLED.
I CAME TO SEE YOU STEAL THE SWORD.
Holy shit!

YOUR WOMAN WILL GET TAKEN, YOU KNOW? YOU SAW, RIGHT?
Stop! I don't want to hear it!
WILL YOU JUST WATCH HER BEING TAKEN AWAY?
Shut up!
THEY ARE HAVING AN AFFAIR.
I said, shut up!
Ms. AYANO!

TACHIBANA
旅籠橘屋
TRAVELLER'S LODGE

THE AIR FEELS OPPRESSIVE.

RAI AND JOUKICHI HAVEN'T SAID A WORD.
MUNCH
Hey. What's with you two?
...



時遍路

LOVE BEYOND TIME

CHAPTER 3: JIGOKU DAYU - HELL'S COURTESAN 11

SCRAPE
SCRAPE
But, how did you get in?
It must've cost a lot.
Some-how.
So you went to the brothel?
Sorry, I got wasted.
THIS IS GOING NOWHERE.
Hey, Rai.
Did you...
...sleep with her?
I did.
Why ...?

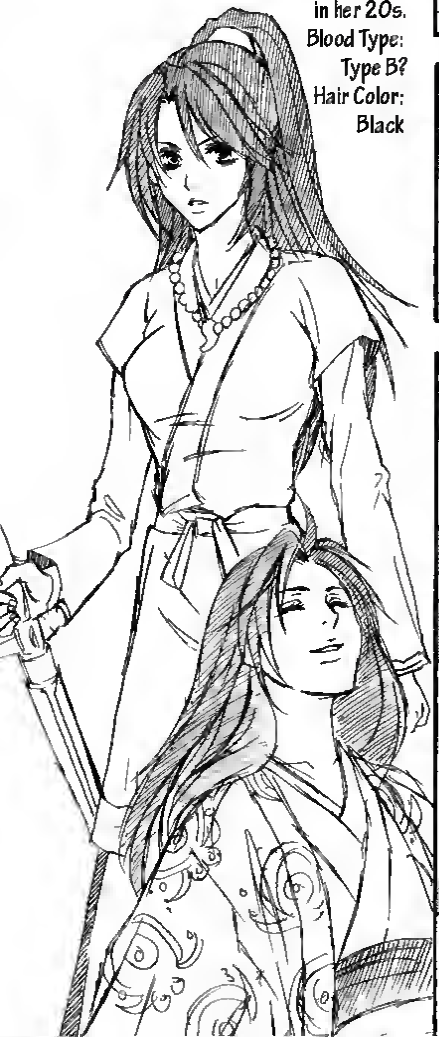
You knew how I felt about her!
I thought you supported me!
She was possessed by countless Magatsu-Kami.
I helped her to regain her senses.
But that's ...!
Don't misunderstand. I was only doing my duty.
I never intended to save or support you.
Moreover, what do you think *those places* are for?

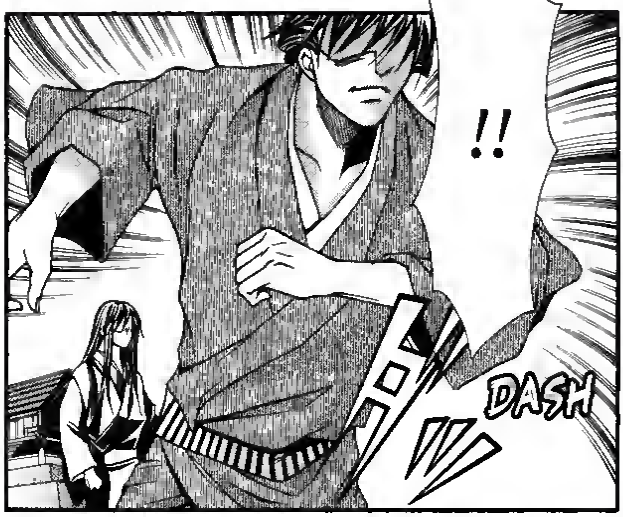
The Creation of Love Beyond Time Vol. 1

This insertion was an advertisement in the magazine that *Love Beyond Time* was published in. In the upcoming free panels, I will describe some of the revisions that were made to the finished comic. A few interesting topics pop up, which I hope will hook you in. (laughs) Now, then. Let's continue on with the story!

First version of Setona's character:

Height: Around 5'1"
Age: Permanently in her 20s.
Blood Type: Type B?
Hair Color: Black





Hey! That's Rai's...!
I'M ANGRY AT MY OWN FOOLISHNESS!
I'LL GIVE THAT BASTARD'S SWORD TO DOCTOR KEIAN!

UNTIL THAT DAY, I LIVED ONLY TO PURIFY SOULS.
THIS IS HOW IT SHOULD BE.

Big trouble! Joukichi stole your sword!
Rai!
With Akesato, I may return to my original self.
That was my duty.
But things changed as I traveled with her.
Happiness. Sadness. I became caught up in such useless emotions.

She planned to escape with her lover, but he never showed.
Kikyo Oiran was caught fleeing.

To think she used to be the best.
I don't want to end up like her.
Me, too.
I'm hurt. Please... just a little.
Could you loosen this rope?
Do you think we'll be affected?
I don't want to get scolded!
SCENES LIKE THIS NEVER BOTHERED ME BEFORE.
BUT NOW THAT I'VE REGAINED MY SENSES...
Who's there?
Please wait.
CLUNK
I will be there in a moment.

So you are Akesato?
Yes.
BITE
AGHHHHH!
Wh-What...?!
MUMBLE
The top spot is mine! I won't give it to you!
If I take a finger, you'll lose your customers.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
You'll end up like me. No, not one. I'll eat all your fingers!
GIGGLE
No matter where you go, only Hell awaits.
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
SMACK
You monster!
Have you not been punished enough?!
THIS PLACE...
Ah...
SMACK

What's wrong, Akesato?
If it is him, can he erase it? Please, hurry. I can't...
...is overflowing with suffering. Dragging you to the depths of Hell.
Rai?!
So you've returned!
Yes.
I am back.
SLIP

!!
Joukichi!
I'm happy you still remember me.
Did you mistake me for yesterday's customer?
Surprised?
You look very seductive, Ms. Ayano.
Have the Magatsu Kami possessed you?
Yes...
Then this sword must frighten you.
But don't worry I would never hurt you.

What do we do, Rai?
We have to get it back!
It is probably in Yoshiwara.
OK. Let's go!
No. I will go alone.
Huh?
Wait...
Tell me. Were you planning to run away with Rai?
That's no good. After all, Doctor Keian and I will be taking very good care of you. ♡

It is not a joke.
It was never my intention to travel together.
I will go alone.
This is my problem, not yours.
This is not the time to be joking around!
What are you saying?!
We should search together!
But..!
Our journey together ends here, Setona.
I will continue to hunt the Magatsu-Kami.
You will go search for Manibe.

I'VE SEEN HIM TURN HIS BACK BEFORE.
IT'S THE SAME AS WHEN I ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS PAST.
!...
Farewell
Rai, wait!!
I can't accept this!
Why?
Even though I...
Even though you what?
Well...
What I mean is...!

I think of you as someone important to me.
We've been together for so long.
Whenever I was sad or frustrated ...
...you were always there for me, Rai!
I don't want to get involved anymore.
I have found someone else.
Huh?
You can't.
It's not like you.
!...
Then, what am I like?
Someone else?
But, yesterday ...
Wait.
You mean, Ms. Ayano?
...
Isn't she Joukichi's ...?
How could you, Rai?

That's because ...
...you never tell me anything.
I THOUGHT WE GOT ALONG WELL.
...you know about me?!
Just what do you think...
Setona!
Did you find him?!
I'm such an idiot!
BUT, RAI. HE...

The Creation of Love Beyond Time (Continued)

Setona started out with black hair.
Her personality was...
- Simple and pure.
- A natural airhead with a strong will.
- Softhearted, with a reckless and strong sense of justice.

ROAR
EDO - YOSHIWARA
There's a fire! Help!
What happened?
Yes. I was heading to Miho-ya.
Is that you, Lord Tanaka?
A fire was set at Miho-ya.
Has the Shogunate discovered our plan?!

Lord Tanaka. Do you not find that man suspicious?
We accepted him as a comrade, however...
What if this sudden fire was his doing?
I could not find him.
What?!
Keian. Where is Keian?!
Yes. This house was entrusted to me.
HAS KEIAN BETRAYED US?!
What?
I was informed that a doctor was needed here.
HE LEFT THE CHILDREN AND VANISHED.
IT IS AS IF HE HAD PLANNED THIS IN ADVANCE.

RUSTLE
What is the meaning of this?!
Did you set Miho-ya on fire?!
RUSTLE
Fires are common there.
Keian, you-!
Watch your step, Lord Tanaka.
Then, are you betraying us?
Don't worry. I will not hinder your plans.
GREAK
GREAK
Why cause such a commotion?
What are you planning?
The poison girl was a failure.
My plans have changed.

Is Akesato also a part it?
Who on earth are you?!
Keian, you...
...then I hate everything in this world!
If you speak of hatred...
What does he plan to do with this monstrous army?!
What of our common hatred?!
My army and I are heading to Edo.

...Tenichibo.
Long ago, my name was...
But...
The man who claimed to be the illegitimate son of General Yoshimune?
Impossible!
Teni... chibo?!
You have changed.
...He was executed!
I know better now.
The only one I can trust is myself.
Really? That's good.
You've been a busy man, Doctor Keian.
You know, Jouki-chi...

CHANGING MY NAME, I PLOTTED MY REVENGE. WITH THIS SWORD, THAT TIME HAS NOW COME!
AGGHHHHH!
TRUSTING OTHERS LEADS TO BETRAYAL.
Your father was an important man.
THE LAST WORDS OF MY DYING MOTHER.
I BELIEVED THEM, AND WAS DECEIVED.
I WAS IMPRISONED AND TORTURED. THROUGH A BRIBE, I ESCAPED EXECUTION.
Where are we heading?
You can't cross the sea in this, you know?
You must be the General's son!
THEY USED MY NAME TO GET MONEY.
WHEN IT GOT OUT OF HAND, THEY FLED.
I'm not lying! I am the General's son!
Only Hell awaits us.
We cannot escape.

Don't worry. I'll protect you!
Then, let us leave it to fate.
EVERYTHING IS RULED BY CHANCE AND FATE.
If we survive these waters...
...then we may was well cross continents.

A fog approaches.
Eternal guardian of the Magatsu-Kami.
...it may also hide our enemies.
Though it may hide us...
You've finally come.
Guess you were right.
Return my sword.

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 13

And what of you?
You are not worthy of that sword!
Are you not the same *kind* as my soldiers?
BAM
What would happen if I struck you with this sword?
!
Shall I test it?
Stop it!

You!
SLICE
What's wrong? Are you afraid?
THUNK
Just bear with it a little more.
I can't run anymore!
Setona, wait!
HUFF
HUFF
CRUNCH

The Creation of Love Beyond Time (Continued)

This is Rai. He was originally supposed to have short hair. I changed my mind though.

Height: Around 6'1"
Age: Late 20s to earlier 30s

Often in deep thought.
Prone to cynicism.
Doesn't talk about himself
Can be quite violent.

It's no use after all.
I'm going to die.
But, I don't like pain. I'm scared.
Huh?
Are you OK?
Setona! Your hand!
No sweat.
Oh.
I can't die, remember?
Still hurts though.

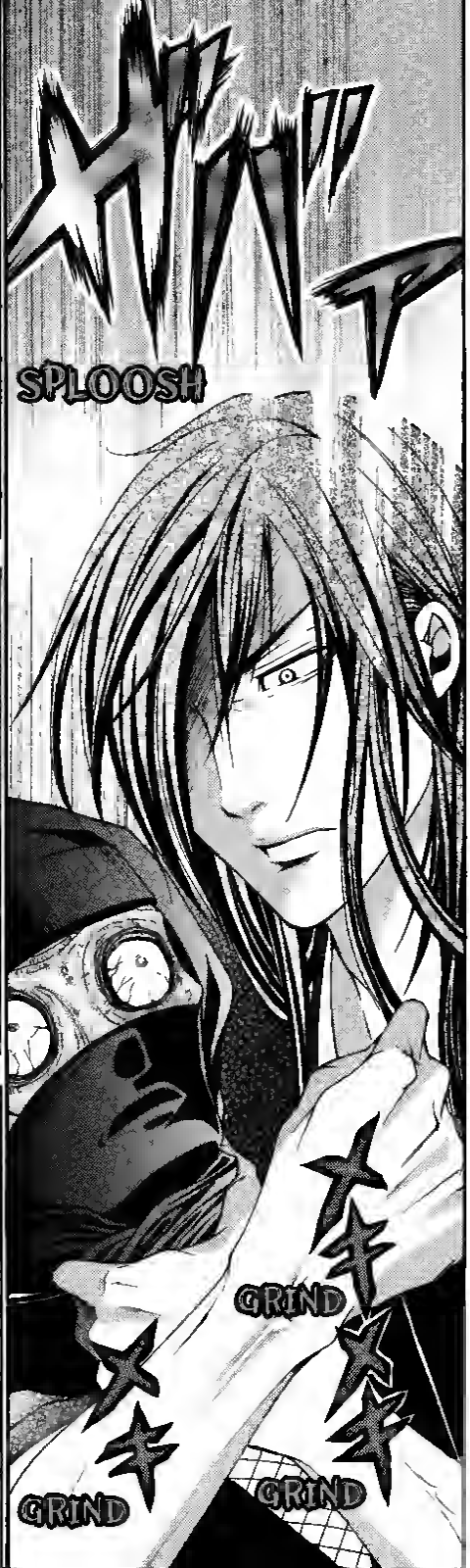
I...
Yeah...
We can rest at the river up ahead.
Just a little more, OK?
Huh?
I'm an idiot.
I want to be strong like you.
I am always being saved.
I don't want to keep regretting.
I NEVER CONFESSED MY FEELINGS TO JOUKICHI...
...BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF BEING HURT.
Saved from the fire. Saved from Doctor Keian.
All I ever did was freeze in fear.
It's OK, Akane.

You're already very strong!
CLASH
ガキィィィ
SLAM
ドカッ
You are powerless without the sword.
Agh!

GRIP
Hmph.
You should guard yourself better.
You're right.
Then, I will just kill this woman.
THUD
WHACK
Akesato...

I have the sword.
The watchman has also been dealt with.
Let us now form a pact as promised!
SPLASH
No!!
NOT YET.
THAT MAN IS STILL ALIVE.
SO LONG AS HE LIVES, HE IS A THREAT.
IF YOU WANT US TO ABIDE, THEN KILL HIM! KILL RAI!
THEN, I SHALL FIND AND KILL HIM.
That is unnecessary.

THUMP
Possessing corpses.
CURSES! THIS BODY IS USELESS!
SNAP
You have fallen, my comrades.
WHOOSH
Have you forgotten our promise?
If so, let me remind you!
MY BODY FEELS HOT.


SPLOOSH
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND

What is this?
That sword is useless. He must be desperate.
You are wrong.
THE FEELINGS I HAD FORGOTTEN.
BOOM
HE EMITS A MONSTROUS AURA.
I CARRY IT AS WELL... THAT DARKNESS!

FSHHHH
BURST
You won't escape!

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 14

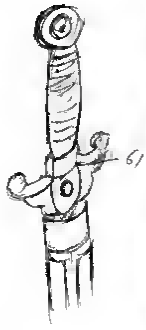
From that union, these were born.
Now rest, my comrades.
FWISH!
With this sword ...
...I purified you for thousands of years ...
...and took your damned souls into my body.
The Magatsu-Kami are being devoured?!
Who is he?!
He...
Return my sword.
Akesato as well.
Still a coward, I see.
SPLOSH
He's a monster!
SHIVER

Dammit!
No. Only...
I could never do the same.
HOW COULD THIS MAN BE SO STRONG?
You purified ...
...and imprisoned their souls in your body.
Are you frightened ?
It is my duty.
You only need to follow me.
STOP FOOLING YOURSELF.
THROB
!!
YOU'RE USING HER FOR YOUR OWN GAIN.
Stop it!
What is wrong?!

The Creation of Love Beyond Time (Continued)

↑

This is also Rai (laughs). He initially had a dog-like face. Though somehow, he ended up resembling a cat.



Rai's sword is an ancient copper sword that functions as a spiritual weapon rather than a practical one. It is useless against anything besides the Magatsu-Kami (laughs). There is a red jewel inserted in its hilt to help boost the sword's magical powers.

The current shape is simpler than the initial sketch. It is the same sword Rai is holding on the front cover. The sheath is also red.

THIS WOMAN IS OUR SACRIFICE!
GRAB
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
Sacri... fice...
It hurts! Let me go!

What... happened?
Over there! That light!
Setona, look!
Aren't these Keian's soldiers?
Stop!
GRIND
Let go!
it hurts!
... sacrifice ...
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
My...

Come to your senses!
I am... Akesato!
IT IS NO USE! MY VOICE CANNOT REACH HIM!
Better not turn around ...
.. you monster!

Is that you, Rai?!
Rai!!

CRACKLE
What are you doing?!
Didn't you go looking for your sword?!
...
Seto... na?
You monster!!
RUSTLE
You...
COUGH
WHY? NO MATTER HOW MUCH I...
WHO IS SHE?
Rai, your body...
!

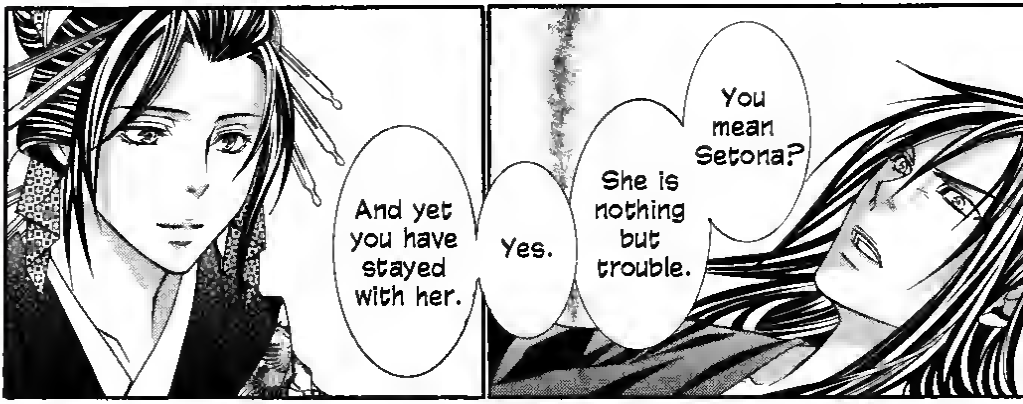
SLASH
Joukichi?! No!!
SLICE
What did I...?
Blood ?
I...

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
Good work, Joukichi!
COLLAPSE
Ugghhh.
FSSHH
Rai... Rai!
Are you OK?!
!
I am fine.
His body changed back.
But, is he really fine?
That black mist from his chest...
Setona.
Really?
Yes.

!!
The sword, right?
I have...
...a favor to ask.
He couldn't have gotten far.
I'll go get it.
You can tell me what happened later.
SHE KNEW WITHOUT ASKING. IS THIS PERSON...
...THE ONE HE HAD TRAVELED WITH FOR SO LONG?
I'll leave Rai to you.
Ms. Akesato, right?

Why did you lie to her?
Your body...
It was for the best.
My life ends here.
I'm sorry, Akesato.
Take my sword.
It will serve to calm the Magatsu-Kami.
No. I refuse.

That sword was made for you.
I am not the one it needs.
I KNOW NOW.
The one who saved you.
You both share a strong bond.
I thought you were strong.
But, that was because she was beside you.



時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 15

So when a light appears in the darkness.
You can't help but reach for it.
Cling to it.
You hide deep within yourself.
There, nothing changes. There, nothing will hurt you.
But as time passes, you begin to forget yourself.
I felt...
...we were the same.
To me, you were that light.
And for you, it is that girl.
Yes.
In a way.

To where I must be.
I SHALL BURY IT IN MY HEART.
Where are you going, Akesato?
If together, we may only create more.
We hold the same darkness.
THESE FEELINGS... ...THAT MAY BE LOVE.
BUT WITH THIS TAINTED BODY...
...I SHALL EMBRACE THAT MAN AND DEVOUR HIM.
MY MAKER.
I WILL DESTROY HIM!

ROAR
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
Everyone! I see you are still well!
I killed him and brought the sword!
GOOD.
HOW-EVER...
Now!
Abide by our contract!
?

YOU SHALL PAY FOR YOUR INSOLENCE, KEIAN!
TIGHTEN!
Wha-?
Wha-?! Aagg- hhh!
NOW, THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR!
Ms. Akesato!
He reaps what he sows.
Yes.
The Magatsu-Kami in your body...
I have been betrayed!
S-Save me, Jigoku Dayu!
Where is Rai?

REACH
すっ…
You are my prey!
What are you-?
I will not let them have you.
GWARRGGHH!
Ms. Akesato, you...
Take the sword back!
Or else, he will die!

He could not tell you....
...because you were that important.
I... don't know.
He never tells me anything.
He also carries the Magatsu-Kami.
Will the sword help him?
Die? But, Rai. He's...
What?
That is not true.
At first, I was bored.
I wanted to see if her *love* would turn to *regret*.
That girl.
Se-tona is...
...my light?
It's cold..

IN TRUTH, I WAS SCARED.
YET SHE ALWAYS STROVE AHEAD.
EVEN I BEGAN TO RECALL PAST MEMORIES.
I DID NOT WANT... THAT KIND AND TENDER-HEARTED GIRL TO LEAVE.
IT IS TOO LATE...
...TO REALIZE THIS NOW...
I got your sword!
Do you hear me, Rai?
Rai!
Rai!!
Did you... die?

Right...
The blood...
...
Why?!
Why...?
If I use the undead blood Rai gave me...!
My blood...
What were you after?
To destroy my body and life.
I was waiting for my chance.
No! I still have not done anything!
My chance to seek revenge!
I cannot die like this!

You will never...
...hurt others for your own gain again!
AN EXISTENCE THAT WAS NEVER ACKNOWLEDGED
YOU MADE THE WRONG CHOICES, KEIAN.
WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS NOT WHERE YOU GO...
BOOM
I will use this body...
...to send you to Hell!
WE WILL GO THERE TOGETHER.
A ship!

...BUT WHO YOU GO WITH.
Rai...
SWALLOW
Rai!
YOU MUST LIVE!

OPEN YOUR EYES!
COME ON, RAI!
LIVE!
!!!
This blood...
Yeah.
...
Setona. You...
Rai!

Chapter 3: Jigoku Dayu - Hell's Courtesan 16

After you struggled to live for so long.
What are you saying?
Then, all our travels together... You never enjoyed them?
That's too sad, Rai!
I lost control of my emotions.
I'm sorry.
You are always like this.
Troubled?
...I remain troubled.
Even now...

I'll leave.
Wait.
Don't go.
I know. I annoy you, right?
But, I can't help who I am.
I wanted to stay with you.
What?
The emotions I had forgotten.
I started to recall them as we traveled together.
But the more I recalled, the more I became afraid of losing you.

HE WAS LIKE A STAR THAT GUIDED ME ON MY JOURNEY.
That was why I decided to separate.
I...
My journey...
...WAS ALWAYS CONNECTED TO MANIBE.
I WANTED TO SEE HIM, BUT I COULDN'T.

I...
Always and always ...
Rai, I...
It wasn't bright, but it was there.
ビクッ! FLINCH!
Joukichi! You're finally awake!
You...
Where... is Ms. Ayano?
I was so scared!

KA-POW
You big idiot!
Good thing you faint at the sight of blood!
That woman was nothing but trouble!
Wh-Why'd you hit me?!
That hurt!
TALKING LIKE THIS WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
Anyways.
You know, I... That is...
STING
What?
You don't like me?
Wait.
What?
Um...
I have always loved you, Joukichi!
!
...huh?
...

As for Rai and Joukichi ...
Hurry up! The fireworks will be over!
Akane boldly confessed to Joukichi, who seems to have accepted it.
BANG
Edo's summer festivals began.
What?
That's not it!
Ms. Ayano, again?
It's a male thing!
GRAB
Hey!
It's the heavy drinker!
My feelings for Ms. Ayano.
I could never forget them.
Akesato Dayu, or Ms. Ayano. Her whereabouts remain unknown.
Competing again, I see.
Trying to, at least.
Shame about Jigoku Dayu. Fire and all.

When it's time to leave, you go out with a bang.
I hope she's somewhere living happily.
She was like a beautiful illusion.
I'm sure it was the same for others.
Bursting from this life to the heavens.
Laughing or crying, you live each day to the fullest.

THROUGH HISTORY.
THROUGH SEASONS THAT WILL NEVER RETURN.
THROUGH MEETINGS AND SEPARATIONS. OUR TIMELESS JOURNEY CONTINUES.
CHAPTER 3 - END

Hurry and grow bigger.
Become an adult.
ON A SUMMER DAY, HE WAS BORN.
Hey, Natsuki!
I HAD WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS DAY.
You look a little like him.
The eyes and the mouth.
Natsuki. That's a good name.

NATSUKI AND I ARE GOING OUT IN SECRET.
Give me my lucky charm!
Are you OK with time?
Do you have your resume?
Yeah.
Yeah.
SCRITCH
Hey, Maho.
Ah! Forgot one thing.
I MET HIM A YEAR AGO AS A STUDENT TEACHER AT HIS HIGH SCHOOL.
Do you believe in witches?
Hey, Teach.
SCHOOL CLEAN-UP TIME
A witch is after me!
What?
BACKS AWAY
...
Isn't that reaction a bit too much?
She's just a girl.
No, she's not. She never ages!
I'm serious!

She's been watching me since I was a kid.
Saying, "Grow up soon."
Or, "Become an adult."
Once I become an adult, she's gonna take me away!
CHUCKLE
What if it comes true?
Natsuki?
HE'S KIND OF... CUTE!
Sorry! Oh, look!
She's gone!
You don't believe me?!
Hey!

時遍路

Love Beyond Time

Epilogue 1

WHEN HE GRADUATED, I BECAME A FULL-TIME TEACHER.
GRADUATION
卒業式
I like you, Teach.
RATTLE
がし
Will you protect me?
I TOOK IT AS A JOKE. BUT FATE BROUGHT US TOGETHER.
THEN SOMEHOW, WE ENDED UP MOVING IN TOGETHER.
OUR RELATIONSHIP IS A SECRET.
Excuse me, Ms. Yamamoto.
Oh, Mr.Tadai.
About July's etiquette class...
Yes?
Well ...
I want to check out a restaurant.
Oh, really.
I was wonder-ing if you'd...

Mr. Tadai is hard to deal with.
Isn't it the same restaurant every year?
What do the other teachers think?
But ...
I have lessons now, so..
!
I'm home! Take a look at this, Maho!
A movie? Will you be in it?
A corpse.
I... see.
Just wait. I'll be a lead star soon!
And your part?
Yeah! A detective movie!
探偵

☐ Love Beyond Time ☐
Epilogue

From here, we are at the story's epilogue as well as the modern era. Manibe's beads have been passed down through the generations. Maho is Shiro's descendant, and Natsuki is Manibe's reincarnation. When Setona meets the modern reincarnation of Manibe, she decides to watch over him (or become his stalker...). This epilogue was drawn to help the characters reach closure.

That said, I don't know if I'm just not good with drawing modern things, but it's apparent from these drawings. I'll try harder. This free panel will also be the last. I'm sorry for all the useless comments. I'm bad at writing, too. (laughs)

I think that *Love Beyond Time*'s Rai and Setona will continue to keep on their journey together. Perhaps someday, somewhere, we'll meet them again. If there's another chance, that is. These are characters I would want to draw again. If I wrote their story in the Muromachi Era or the Kamakura Period, it may have ended with a stronger impact. Well. I want them to continue a bit more, it's hard to part with them.

I think those who are allowed to draw comics with those thoughts in mind are truly blessed.

I got scouted after I graduated.
I barely make ends meet now.
But, I really love it. I'll definitely make it!
When I do. Let's get married, OK?
OK.
I'll wait.

I ALSO GOT SWEPT UP BY NATSUKI'S PASSION.
SINCE WE MET, HE HAS FACED EVERYTHING HEAD-ON.
I'll definitely make it come true.
Hey, Maho. I want to see it.
See what?
Maho's good luck charm.
I love you.
Yeah. It gives me a strange feeling.
CLATTER
You mean this?

You know, Maho.
Whenever I see this, I feel at ease.
It's a family heirloom from my mother's side.
When she passed away, it was passed down to me.
What was your mother like?
A kind and strong woman.
She was also a teacher.
When I was little, she taught me about history.
So that's why you became a teacher?
She loved children and was well respected.
I always wanted to become like her.
Yeah.

No, not at all.
Why?
Oh, right. I'll be late on Friday.
I have to go somewhere with Mr. Tadai.
I think you're amazing, Maho!
TH-THUMP
We have to inspect a restaurant.
Other teachers will be there, too.
Where?!
Isn't he that perverted science teacher?!
Excuse me.
You can drop me off here.
No. It's too dangerous.
WHY IS IT JUST THE TWO OF US?
THAT WAS THE PLAN, BUT...
TAXI

GEEZ!
Then, I'll see you tomorrow.
HE'S NOT LISTENING TO ME!
Please, Mr. Tadai!
Which floor are you on?
This is a nice place.
It has good security and looks safe.
STEP
STEP
Maho? Is that you?
Maho and I live together.
...
What about you?
I live here.
NATSUKI!
What are you doing here?
Yoshi-oka?

IF A RUMOR SPREADS ABOUT US...
But, to say that we live together ...
THIS IS BAD.
Did you see that?
His expression. Good thing I got rid of him, right?
CLATTER
Are you saying I don't have a real job?
What?
Unlike you, if I don't have a real job...
...MY FAMILY WILL FIND OUT.
That's not it!
Or, do you prefer Mr. Tadai now?
If it's about money, I help out when I can.
So why can't I tell people we live together?

In other words.
I am in your way?
Being a teacher was my dream.
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHERS...
It's a crucial time for me now.
I don't want to ruin all my efforts.
MY LESSONS HAVE BEEN GOING WELL.
I'm going to bed.
Natsuki ...
BAM
WHISHHH
DID I HURT HIM?
BUT...

I LOVE MY JOB. I LOVE THE CLASS-ROOM.
MR. TADAI LATER BELIEVED MY STORY.
I have to trick him!
I'm home.
I'LL APOLOGIZE AND MAKE NATSUKI SOMETHING DELICIOUS.
Natsuki?!
What... is this?
Thank you for everything. I'm returning your key.

DASH
BAM
Thank you for everything?
NATSUKI LEFT?!
What...?
Natsu-ki!
Oh!
THAT PERSON IS...!

Wait!
Why is she here?
NATSUKI DIDN'T COME BACK.
About Yoshi-oka.
There's nothing between us.
What is it?
Can we talk, Ms. Yamamoto?
HE IGNORED MY CALLS AND TEXTS.
HE WASN'T AT HIS PARENTS' HOUSE EITHER.

時遠路

LOVE BEYOND TIME

EPILOGUE 2

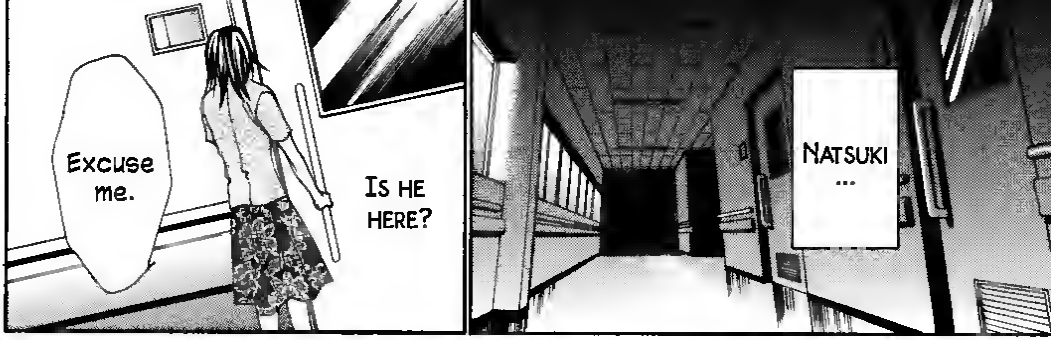
There is nothing between us anymore.
TWO MONTHS PASSED.
STARE
I don't want to go!
Etiquette class sucks!
At least we can eat good food.
IN TWO MONTHS ...
Look! It's Natsuki Yoshioka!
He's so cool!
It's really him!
He's really popular nowadays! He's hot!
NATSUKI, HE...
Hey, Teach!
Yes?
Is it true Natsuki went to our school?

...STARTED ACTING AND BECAME A HUGE HIT.
For reals?!
Yes. It's true.
Look forward to it!
Natsuki will host variety shows?
NATSUKI IS NOW A STAR.
HIS BOLD PERSONALITY MADE HIM POPULAR.
HE'S NOT ONLY MODELING AND ACTING...
Good for you, Natsuki.
TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY ...
DO YOU STILL REMEMBER?
7

It's your twentieth birthday.
I THOUGHT WE'D BE CELEBRATING IT TOGETHER.
WITH A CAKE AND CANDLES.
NATSUKI ...
NATSUKI
I MISS YOU!
HUH ...?
* * *

Hey, Maho.
Sorry for not contacting you sooner.
Natsuki?!
NATSUKI CALLED ME! I'M SO HAPPY! I WANT TO HURRY AND SEE HIM!
I thought about a lot that day.
I decided not to see you until I made it.
Can we meet? I have something for you.
I MISS YOU, NATSUKI!

Is this Ms. Yamamoto?
Hello? Natsuki?
Oh!
He's late...
Huh? Who...?
Yoshioka won't be arriving.
Yes?
I am Yoshioka's manager.
This is she.
His voice echoed in my ears. I couldn't believe it.
He was in an accident. A truck hit him on the street.
You will believe me after you see him.
I will give you directions to the hospital.
GENERAL HOSPITAL
総合病院


Excuse me.
Is he here?
Natsuki ...

Huh?

Why didn't you protect him?
You're...

THE ONE NATSUKI WAS ALWAYS AFRAID OF.
I won't let you have him!
So it was you?!
You caused Natsuki's accident?!
THE WITCH!
You can't!
Since you've separated ...
Is it OK if I take him?
I have waited for a long time.
But, I guess this is the end.
I leave him in your care.
I THOUGHT I LEFT IT AT HOME.
How ...?
I have lived for a long time.
It was a joke.
Ah...
In exchange, I will take this.

DASH
RUSTLE
Ma...ho?
Ah!
Natsuki! Are you all right?!
How are your injuries?!
...
What are you talking about?
Huh?
THANK GOODNESS HE WASN'T HURT.
Did my manager really say that?
Sorry Maho, it's because I told them about you.
I guess I overworked myself and got anemic.
I remember trying to avoid an accident, but...
You know. I got this big break...
...in exchange for leaving you.
They didn't want any scandals.
But I couldn't stand being away from you, so...
...I agreed to do it for two months.
NATSUKI ...

It's OK.
Here.
If I got famous by then, I'd come out on top.
I'm sorry, Natsuki.
I only thought about myself.
Take this.
Management wouldn't want to lose me.
I want *you* for my twentieth birthday present.
Yes... Yes, Natsuki!
I want to be with you forever!
Be mine, Maho.
I LOVE YOU!

You know. I'm not sure, but...
...I think I saw the witch save me from the accident.
Are you sure, Setona? He is your precious Manibe's ...
... reincarnation.
Yeah.
That's why I protected him for twenty years.
But he lives a different life now. He is not my Manibe.
I see.
Well, then.
Shall we go?
Yeah.
INTO THE FUTURE!

LOVE BEYOND TIME
END

INFORMATION

http://tatuzawa.sakura.ne.jp/aoiro/

http//tatibanaeikablog72fc

https//twitter.com/tikuhime

Afterword

Thank you for reading *Love Beyond Time*! I have talked about various things during the free panels, but please bear with me a little longer.

Now, then! If you have read the second volume, then you must have read the first volume too! Doesn't hurt to think positive, right? *Love Beyond Time* is now complete. All revisions and corrections are finished, so everything has really come to an end. Even when I was doing other work, somewhere in my mind I was always thinking about *Love Beyond Time*. While still raw in many aspects, I was super happy when my work was made into a comic book series.
(Getting annoyed? I'll say it however many times I want! Ha!)

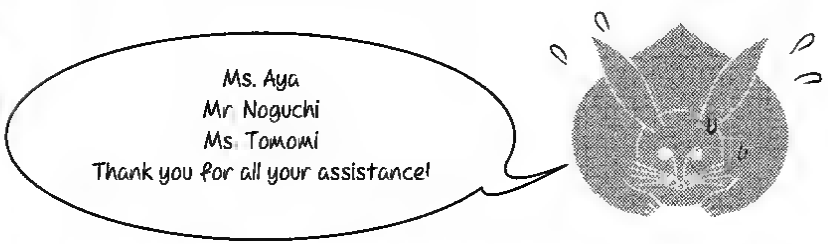
During every 12-page serialization of *Love Beyond Time* in the magazine, there was space left for advertisements or character introductions. So in the comic book version, I put extra panels in those spaces. Those newly added scenes were published in the comic book version. I'm looking forward to it! Since I couldn't read through it before being published, I'm sorry if the flow turns out bad!

To my editor at the time, the publishers, and all the booksellers who carried my work,
thank you very much!

I would also like to show my appreciation to Shobunkan and the editor-in-chief of *Sengoku-burai*. Even now, he is allowing me to serialize my work. In commemoration of *Love Beyond Time*, the comic book version will be the first volume in Burai Comics, Shobunkan's side imprint that carries historical-themed stories... I'm really nervous!

The comic series *Sengoku-burai* is published in all types of media such as magazines, web, and cellphones. I was also allowed to draw a series based on Shiro Amakusa called *Baraiso*. Please take a look at it!

Lastly, thank you so, so much for reading *Love Beyond Time*!
I'd be happy if it touched you in the slightest.



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この本へのご意見、ご感想をお待ちしております。
先生へのファンレターは、下記宛先編集部気付「竹姫先生」までお送りください。

無頼コミックス

時遍路　＜下＞

著者　竹　姫
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